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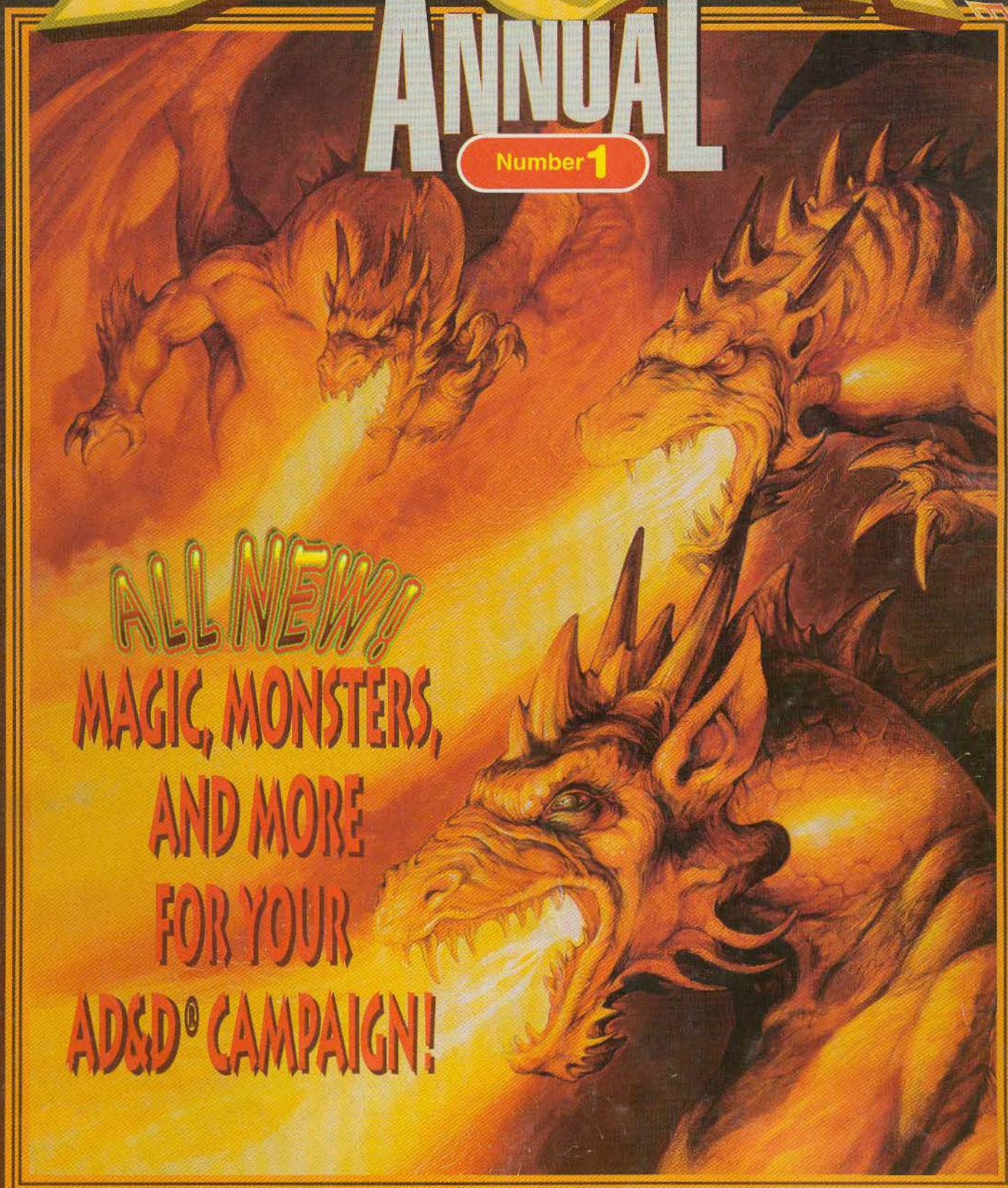

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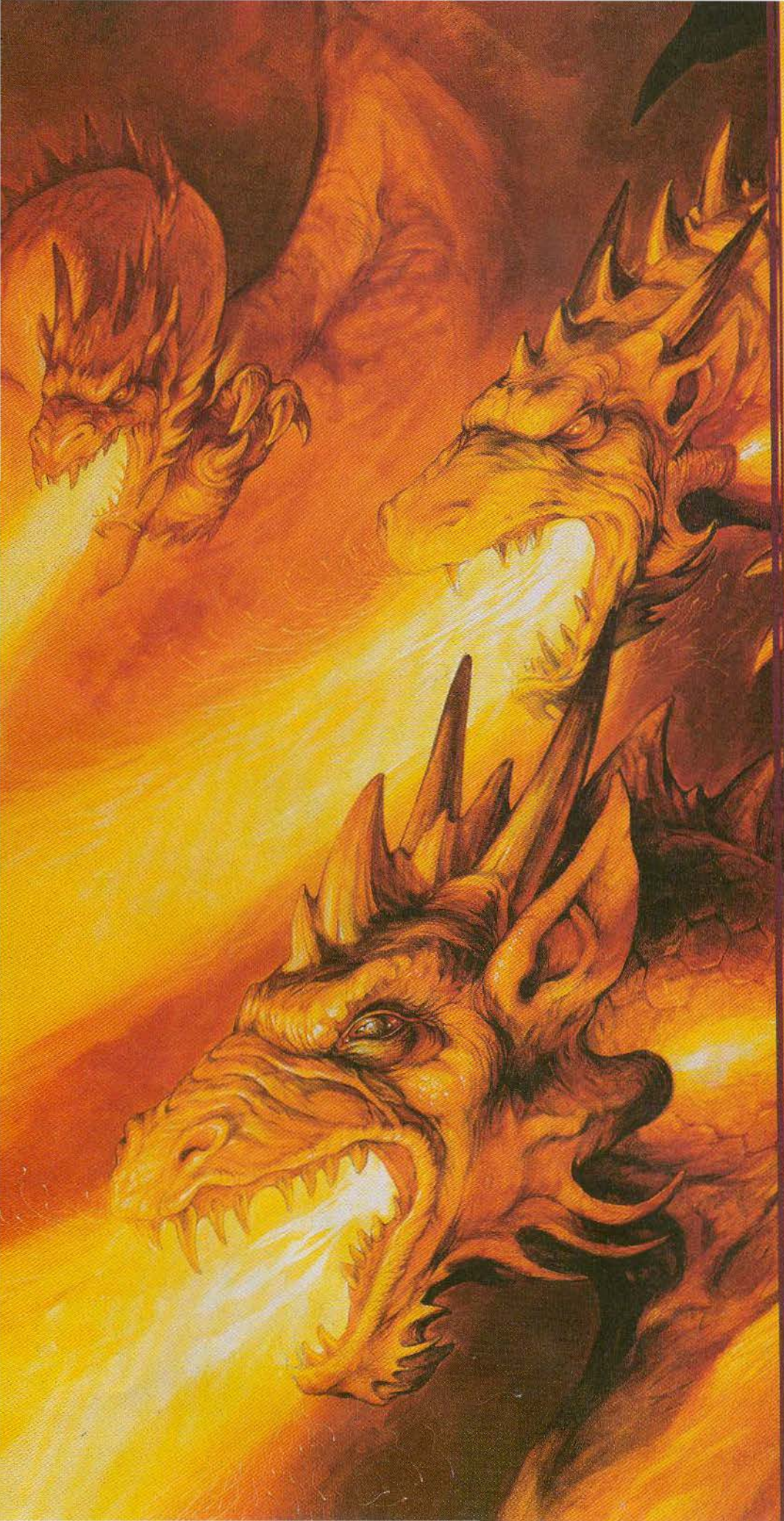

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The Wyrm's Turn™

Let's play

Welcome to the *Dragon® Magazine Annual* #1. For our premiere issue, we've gathered all-new AD&D® game articles and a feature on each of the TSR game settings of 1996, along with a special treat or two. While you'll still count 120 pages in this issue, you'll notice that many more of them are devoted to game information. This issue is packed with things you can *use*.

You'll recognize many of the names of this issue's contributors, the most prolific of our writers, artists, and cartographers – along with some hot new talents who are sure to grace our pages in 1997 and beyond. The articles in this *Annual* reflect the new direction we charted with issue #225 in January of this year. These are articles full of spells, magical items, new abilities for your player characters, and more information that you can take straight to the gaming table.

Here you can find secrets of the new Palace of Silverymoon, bastion of the youngest kingdom in the Forgotten Realms® setting. Then turn to new *Skills & Powers* for your Dark Sun® PCs, over two dozen new varieties of vampire for the Ravenloft® setting, and far more than a handful of gate keys for players of the Planescape® campaign. Read of the events that set the stage for the new Dragonlance®: Fifth Age™ Saga, and explore new options for Rogue characters in the Birthright® campaign. With few exceptions, there's no reason you can't use any of this material in a different setting, or even in your own house campaign.

The first thing anyone notices about a TSR game is its fantastic cover art, and we're fortunate to have many of the finest fantasy artists in the business right here at home. Here's a gallery of some of their best work from the past year, free of cover text and logos.

The heart of any issue of *Dragon Magazine, however,* remains the AD&D game articles, and here we offer new spells for Ice Wizards, insights on the ecology of a classic fantasy monster, a bestiary of the most dangerous predators of any Underdark campaign, some of the coolest and weirdest armor you'll ever discover, and three fascinating rogues from one of the best TSR novel series – presented by the author herself.

Also included in this issue is a special *Dungeon® Adventures* section, featuring a scenario by veteran contributor Chris Perkins. As with many of the modules produced by our sister publication, "Wyrmsmere" fits easily into nearly any fantasy world, or it can serve as the start of a whole new campaign, with plenty of adventure hooks to continue the story.

In keeping with our dedication to TSR's classic game settings, here is a new look at an old Spelljammer® race, focusing on ways to use them in your "groundling" campaign. And as a special treat for veterans of the AD&D game, we're printing an astounding new discovery: the original map of Oerth, expanding the lands of the Greyhawk® setting far beyond the boundaries of the Flanaess.

If you're a subscriber to *Dragon Magazine,* this issue comes to you free (and early), a token of our thanks for your loyal patronage. If you picked up this magazine on the newsstand, we hope you enjoy it enough to become a subscriber. Next year's *Dragon Magazine Annual* is also free to subscribers.

Our hope is that there's something for everyone within these pages – and that you'll use it in your game. More than anything, we'd like a spot at your gaming table.

Dave Gross

Dragon®

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Dragon®

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

1996
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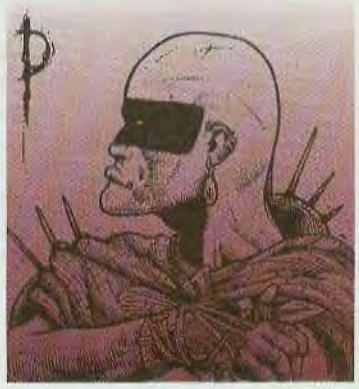

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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Game

by Steve Winter

The AD&D® game is full of contrasts. It's a game of high adventure and low. It's about bold deeds and craven acts. It is filled with intrepid heroes and wicked scoundrels. Our game worlds are populated with cardboard characters, stereotypes who line up in familiar, easily recognized, sometimes way-too-predictable patterns. At the same time, moving and fighting and living among those flat characters are the PCs, who are often as intricately detailed as baroque furniture.

We accept that dichotomy without question because it's not much different from life. Most of us know, or think we know, a great deal about ourselves, but we know much less about other people. The last time I bought a pair of pants, I didn't ask the sales clerk what his goals were or how much money he had in his pocket. I suspect that he had some cash and hope that he had some goals, but even if I'm wrong on both counts, it didn't interfere with our business.

So the fact that NPCs aren't fully fleshed-out individuals is noticeable only by the DM. Like a Hollywood street scene, all the detail is where it can be seen; who knows or cares what you might find, if anything at all, beyond the edge of the frame?

The game's rules are also a study in contrasts. At its core, AD&D is a very simple game. But looked at in its entirety, it has remarkable depth and complexity.

Look up a THAC0 and subtract the target's armor class; roll that number or higher on your d20, and somebody got stabbed. Roll a die and subtract that number from your sparring partner's hit points; if any are left over, he's still alive!

These are all remarkably simple rules. But if that's all there was to it, the AD&D game would be enormously popular with seven-year-olds. Instead, after establishing those rules, the game then does an abrupt about-face and describes several hundred ways to break them, mainly by using magical spells and special abilities. All this is part of the standard rules.

No one of these rules is very complex, but when they are all put together, the weight of all those class/race/proficiency/equipment/magic combinations is staggering. A person could play the AD&D game for decades and never try out every option (but it's good work if you can get it).

If all that still isn't enough to satisfy your role-playing lust, you can throw in the PLAYER'S OPTION™ books. Now you have a much more complex and realistic game. It is quite a different animal from the game we started out playing.

The feeling that the game imparts contrasts sharply with the process of playing it. Through all the changes, expansions, and options, the rules themselves maintain a degree of abstraction, partly because the rules started out so simply. Once you begin trying to make the rules account for every factor, simplicity quickly disappears.

More importantly, this is also because abstraction enhances the illusion of heroic reality. A rigorous simulation of the moment-by-moment dynamics of combat is well within our ability to create, but we have intentionally avoided it. All that emphasis on blow and counterblow demands a lot of concentration from the players. Focusing everyone's attention on mathematics or a hex grid shatters the perception of being part of the action. The motions of a life or death struggle are reproduced, but the feeling isn't.

Abstract combat rules, by way of contrast, maintain tension by keeping the action flowing at a crisp pace. Players are forced to fill in the details with their imaginations. These internalized images are far more vivid than anything happening on a table top and create an intense sense of "being there."

Finally, there is a striking contrast between the world as it is presented in the AD&D game and the world as it is presented in other forms of entertainment.

The AD&D game is a throwback to pre-1980s ways of seeing reality. In it, the world is a dangerous place filled with bloodthirsty monsters, vengeful spirits, and embodied evil. That's pretty much the way mankind has always seen the world, from our primitive, superstitious beginnings right up to now.

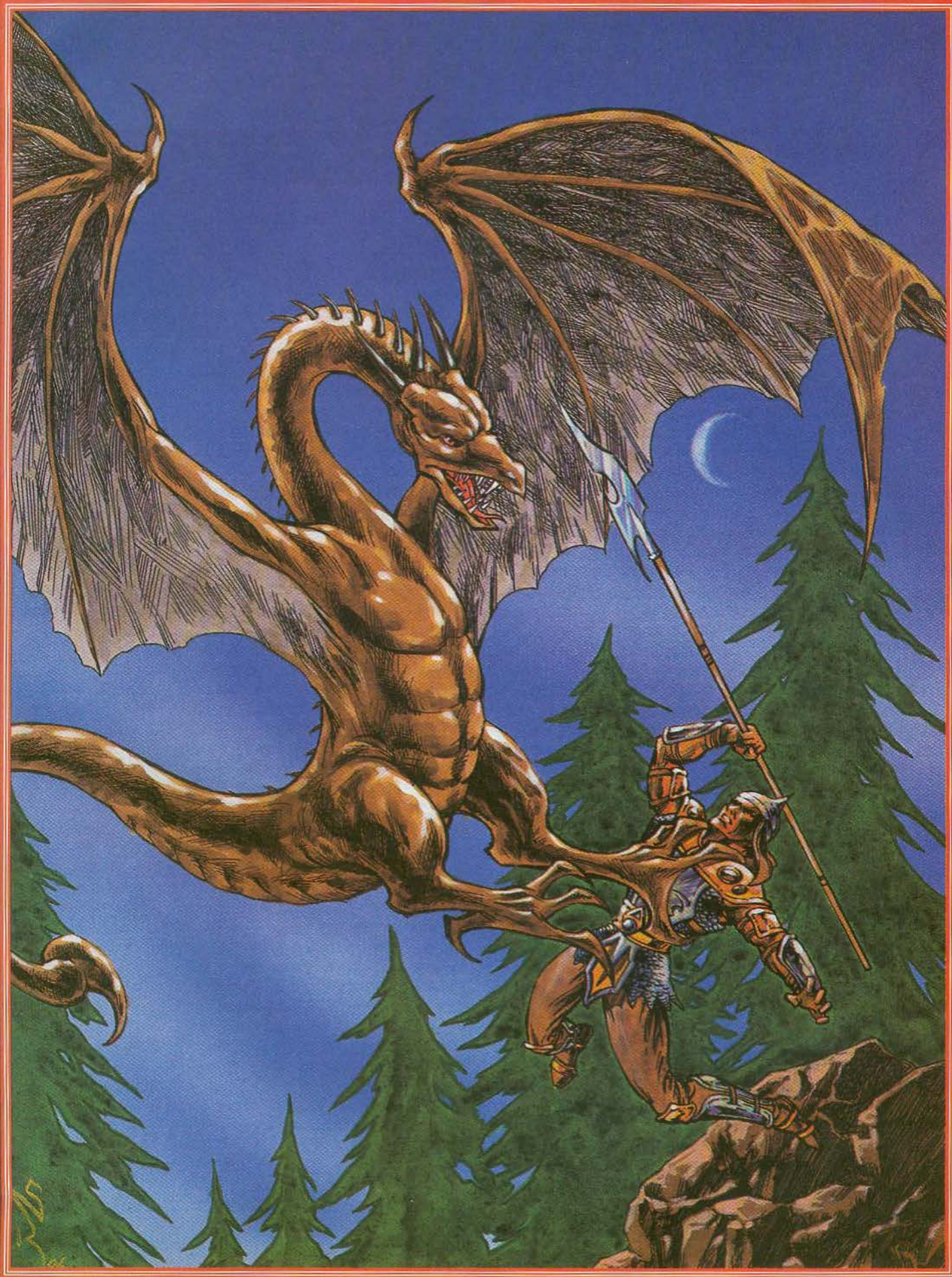
An AD&D hero overcomes all those forces arrayed against him by being stalwart and resolute and by refusing to surrender to fear. Like the indian or the bushman confronted by an evil spirit, he shouts his defiance and leaps to the attack because he knows that courage and strength will see him through.

That's no longer the case, at least according to a lot of modern mythology and popular entertainment. Terrorists, serial killers, and negligent drivers have taught us all too well that the strong don't always survive, the pure of heart don't always triumph. Horror movies go a step further and tell us that the strong and the pure are, in fact, the favored victims of evil, and all their best efforts won't change the ending.

OK, that's reality, but it's not the whole of reality. In a lot of cases, the strong and the pure still triumph through their own virtues. Life hasn't changed; mythology has.

It's important to remember that there's a great big world beyond Hollywood and the nine o'clock news, and most of it is what we make it. The AD&D game reaffirms that men and women can beat the odds and change the world. It's good to be reminded of that occasionally.

Steve Winter, a long-time gamer and TSR employee, is currently the product manager for the AD&D game line.



substance deposited on their clothing or flesh, just around or in the wounds that killed them. There was more of this tar scattered around the ground, and lines of tar-drops criss-crossed the field from a number of directions.

"At first, none of our band would venture an explanation for this matter. When one of the survivors pointed out that each of the dead men had been stung, clawed, or bitten – but that only the wounds from the wyvern's venomous stinger were tar-coated – it became obvious that the tar was the creature's poison, partially dried from exposure to sun and wind. The lines of tar-drops on the field had to be drippings from the wyvern's stinger as it swooped toward the men. Sure enough, some of these lines led directly to and past the bodies of the dead.

"Just as the survivors had said earlier, the nobleman's son was not among the dead. Indeed, a line of poison-drops led off in the direction that they said the wyvern had taken their struggling commander, the drops becoming increasingly separated as the beast gained speed and altitude in its flight. The fact that the boy had struggled in the wyvern's grasp brought up another point. Upon asking, I learned that while the survivors didn't notice it at the time, they did confirm that their leader was never stung, only bitten and crushed somewhat in its talons. The creature didn't seem to take any great pains to insure that its grip was comfortable, so while it didn't necessarily desire him alive or intact, it did apparently not want him poisoned.[1]

"With such an obvious trail ahead of us, we set off to follow the wyvern's headlong flight to its lair. Unfortunately, the poison-drippings quickly became so dispersed as to be impossible to follow, so our scout made for high ground in order to attempt to regain the path. He didn't re-establish our route, but he did discover that on the bald crown of a hill the same sort of poison-marks could be found in abundance, some of them as fresh as those we had seen before, and others dried to a chalky discoloration on the rocks. On seeing these marks in this context, the locals with us noted that they had seen much the same on prominent rocks and solitary trees throughout the region but had always assumed that they were just some natural phenomena.

"With the trail hopelessly lost, we decided to make camp near this hilltop. If the wyvern's visits to this site were as frequent as the patterns on the rocks would have it, we felt confident that it would soon return to lead us to its lair.

"As we'd expected, the next day our attention was called to a wyvern that flew by overhead. After initially passing the rock, it circled back to fly directly over it with its tail strangely low. Poison dripped down from its stinger to mark the rock, and the wyvern then took to the high sky, swooping, circling, and making all manner of hisses and growls as if deliberately trying to call attention to itself. It took some minutes, but eventually another wyvern flew into view. Upon sighting the first, it flew close, ignoring the other beast while it swooped down to see or smell the markings on the rocks below. Once it detected the fresh poison-marks, it arrowed toward the other, hissing and growling at great volume until it actually reached striking range of the other, at which point both became instantly silent.[2]

"Then the two flying reptiles came together to perform one of the most beautiful yet terrifying scenes I have ever beheld. The beasts came together in mid-air, batting their wings at each other like a pair of fighting roosters, each attempting to gain the upper hand, as it were, while all along struggling to remain airborne. Then, most suddenly, they came together in a most unroosterly embrace, their powerful legs interlocked, their wings awkwardly beating the air, and their long, limber tails and necks twining around each other. For all of the ferocity of their encounter, neither used its stinger to injure the other. They did not use their deadly talons to do more than hold each other, and neither would open its mouth to employ its painful bite on its opponent."

While Aidan and Fiona sat engrossed in the life-and-death struggle they imagined going on over their own heads, Grainne dropped her eyes and blushed.

"At first many members of our party thought much the same as our dear Grainne here," Brendan said, causing the older girl's blush to deepen while the two younger children merely looked on confused. "But what I knew of beasts in general and wyverns in particular told me that their breeding season was long past. Indeed, it was more the season to give birth to young conceived the year before than to engage at creating more.[3]

"No, what we were seeing overhead was something else entirely, and at that moment I had but an inkling of what it could be.

"As they hovered there, writhing together, each wyvern sought to work its own tail free of the others, attempting then to force the stinger at its tail's tip into the grimly shut mouth of the other. "Eventually, the second wyvern forced its poison on the first. Once released, the defeated beast made haste to fly away from the site of the encounter. After triumphing over the intruder, the victorious wyvern circled down to land on the poison-stained rocks that seemed to be the center of the conflict. On the ground it hopped about, looking more like a frantic hen than a majestic bird of prey. Still, while the motions were random in appearance, the creature's dance was quite controlled, for as it skittered around the hilltop it also deliberately dripped poison, layer upon layer, over every mark that the interloper had made.

"Once the creature was satisfied, it took a deep sniff of the hilltop air and took to the sky, flying a path that seemed to overlay the pattern of poison marks we had followed the day before, telling us that this second wyvern, the victor in the aerial battle, was the one that we had been stalking. Although we could not follow its soaring flight for long, it was evident that it frequently paused to sweep toward the prominent places where we had seen the most

1. Although all wyverns are immune to the poison of their kind, they do not enjoy the taste of another's poison. Indeed, the only two forms of carrion even the most desperate wyvern will never eat are animals killed by another wyvern's venom or the flesh of another wyvern itself, for such meat is tainted by the taste of that poison. While humans cannot normally smell wyvern poison, they find the taste of wyvern meat similarly unpalatable.

For this reason, wyverns providing food for their offspring must be careful not to use their stingers on it. Instead, they usually bring the prey back alive, to ensure its taste and to give the young some experience in using their own stingers on prey.

Carrying live prey back to its lair is something only an adult wyvern could ever do. Young wyverns – with smaller claws, an inexpert grip, and less experience in such things – find it much easier to kill their prey *in situ*, carrying the mangled and poisoned carcass back to their own lairs to eat in peace. Fortunately for wyverns, only adults with young in their nests have any reason to worry about live, unpoisoned prey.

If an immature wyvern was carrying a kill back to its lair and was startled or wounded in mid-flight, it would likely drop its burden in shock. Older specimens have more control, able to keep their grip on prey even if it is alive and struggling while in mid-air.

2. Because the object of the battle to come is for one wyvern to force its poison into the other's mouth, neither will open its mouth unnecessarily during such a fight.

3. Wyverns mate in the late fall or early winter of every second year. They lay one egg (two, if living conditions are particularly favorable) two or three months later and that egg hatches after another month, at the end of winter or the start of spring. The young wyvern isn't ready to leave the nest until late the next spring, so adult wyverns with one clutch of young in the nest do not mate that year to ensure that the juvenile in their nest doesn't kill the spring hatchling.

Territorial terrors

THE ECOLOGY of the Wyvern

by Spike Y. Jones

illustrated by Scott Rosema

"And if I take four coins away from this group of seven coins, how many are left?"

"Four! No, five!"

"Aidan, please don't interrupt Fiona's arithmetic lesson. It will be time for yours soon enough, and you had best practice your divisions now if that's the best you can do with your sister's subtraction." His admonition finished, Brendan Farwanderer turned his attention back to his youngest charge. "Now Fiona, how many ..."

"Six! There's six of them out there, plus an officer on horseback. And all in the earl's colors."

"And Edward, the miller's son, is with them," added Grainne softly from her seat by the window.

"Ed-wart, Ed-wart, Grai-ainne's sweetheart," Aidan sang, nearly dodging the cushion thrown by his sister.

"Children, I know it's trying for you to be quiet for more than a moment, but you do have assignments you could be performing instead of disrupting ..."

"But what's that they're doing with the buckets and the ladder?"

"Lemme see! Lemme see!" piped in Fiona, running from the table to the window-bench. Defeated, Brendan trailed behind the youngest child to see what so distracted his students.

"It looks like they're painting the top of the pole above the mayor's house ... painting it black ... or brown."

"In fact, Aidan," Brendan Farwanderer said from behind the boy, "those militiamen are poisoning the village."

"Huh?" replied the children in unison.

"They are poisoning the village for our protection."

"I hear a story coming," Aidan cried over his shoulder as he ran to the keg to fetch a cup for the storyteller.

"Yes Aidan," the bard said, pulling his chair to a place where he could see the progress of the soldiers. The children settled into places on the bench where they could divide their attentions between their teacher and the sights outside.

"As we seem unable to concentrate on the arithmetic today," continued Aidan, "we may as well turn to natural history. The story of the wyvern watch began many years ago in the town of Dunn, some days to the south and east of here, hard upon the mountains of Pah. That rough region had only recently been colonized by men, and it was only sparsely inhabited by hardy crofters keeping sheep and goats in pastures in the hills above their farms.

"It was a harder life than that of our local farmers, and it became intolerable when a beast began preying on the livestock at a prodigious rate. The unlucky crofters petitioned their lord about the problem, and he responded by calling together a band of militiamen to hunt down the monster. Now, while his militia could have driven off or exterminated a pack of wolves or suchlike, they were far from being able to consider action against a family of wyverns."

"Wyverns," whispered Grainne, involuntarily looking out the window at the heraldic device emblazoned on the shield of the earl's officer.

"But this lord possessed a magical treasure that he entrusted to his son, who was then given the command of the company. Armed with a pike of dragonslaying, the son was confident of his ability to slay any dragonkin. Led by such a one, the militiamen were much more willing to face the monster than they would normally have been.

"Unfortunately, a wyvern is not a true dragon to be slain by a weapon enchanted only against those creatures, and that band met with disaster in the wilderness. A few days after they'd gone forth, a few survivors of the expedition staggered back into the lord's modest keep to tell him of the death of the remainder of the band, and of his son's worse fate. The son had been carried aloft by the wyvern (even as he bravely struck at it with his enchanted weapon), presumably to be eaten alive by the beast in its inaccessible lair.

"Deprived of his heir and of the only magical armament capable, he thought, of destroying this menace to life and profit, the lord hired a band of stalwart adventurers who happened to be passing through the region, tasking them to rid his fief of this threat, and to rescue his son or recover his remains (and, of course, the pike). And as you might surmise, this band of adventurers included myself, in the role of chronicler, among others.

"Even if two of the survivors had not agreed to accompany us, leading us to the place where the company had been destroyed, we would have had little difficulty finding the site. On the first day of marching we followed the paths used by the goatherds themselves to crest the hills surrounding the village. After that point, we had merely to trace the rather obvious trail left by a score of men making no effort to conceal their movements.

"The site of the debacle was both horrible and puzzling. Bodies of unfortunate farmers, forced into a situation beyond their expertise, were strewn across a rocky clearing, curiously untouched by scavengers (or a returning wyvern) for all that they had lain unguarded for the better part of a week. Although there was no obvious reason for such reluctance on the part of the area's other animals, the bodies did display one other peculiar feature: they all had a curious tar-like

repeated of markings, apparently inspecting their condition or renewing them periodically.[4]

"When we had discerned the regular pattern of the wyvern's hunting patrols it became but a matter of time before we discovered the beast's lair. On the next day, the wyvern once again passed our hill, approaching from the same direction. It took great pains at our hill to check for lingering reminders of the intruder of the day before, but it found no such sign, it quickly returned to its rounds. (Fortunately, our own magical and mundane concealment was sufficient to protect us from the wyvern's watchful eyes.)

"After the creature left, we made our way across country to the place we had seen it circling prior to our hilltop. On arriving, we found, as we had expected, another site covered with its poison marks. It took some days of observing the wyvern's flight and back-tracking its path to come to the point where its flights began, a cliff with a shallow cave-nest for protection and heaped bones and other detritus around it. A simple spell of magic detection sufficed to locate the pike among the broken branches bones. None of these remains could be identified as those of the lord's son, but we had harbored no great hope of finding him alive at that late date.

"Knowing how devastating a wyvern's attack could be in a situation of its own choosing, we decided to lay an ambush for it, intending to attack as it left its cave the next morning. During the night we set ourselves up on ledges near the cave-mouth and at vantage points on the ground where we would be able to use spells and missiles to best effect.

"As the wyvern finally showed itself shortly after dawn, we struck. The first attack was a *web* spell cast on its wings just as it took off for its morning patrol, forcing it to crash to the ground. Unfortunately, it was strong enough to sunder the *web* immediately after the initial shock wore off, and we had to fight it rather intensely to finish it off.

"Because we were so intently concentrating on the fierce creature, one of the bowmen near the cave-mouth failed to notice when a young wyvern emerged from the cave at his back. As you would expect, the monster stung the hunter, who collapsed in agony. Conall Stone-Shatterer quickly cast another *web*, and this one was completely effective, as the juvenile simply was not strong enough to break out.[5] Before the other adventurers could kill the helpless monster, I suggested an alternative. A potentially profitable alternative.

"Although he suffered great pain from his wound and from the venom coursing through his body, the poisoned bowman did not die. This can be attributed more to the weakness of the immature wyvern's poison than from any special healing attentions from other party members, as our band was somewhat less well prepared for this venture than we had thought.[6]

"As a result, transporting our captive back to civilization, where our profit could be realized, presented a certain problem. Stone-Shatterer, our sole mage, was a veritable arsenal of deadly magics for use in combat; however, of mass teleportation, flight, and even monster charming, he knew little. Our purpose here had to been to slay a wyvern, not to capture one. With no magical aid forthcoming we had to make do with a much slower means of transportation. After securely binding the young wyvern's wings so that it couldn't fly from us, and more securely binding its tail and muzzle so that it could neither sting nor bite us as it struggled, we made it walk between a pair of our horses at the ends of long ropes stretched taut. The horses were no happier than the wyvern at this situation, but we persevered.

"For a time, the sight of horseflesh in front served for the hungry carnivore as a carrot for a donkey,[7] but that soon wore off, leaving a long, hard trek. If wyverns were as cunning as dragons, this one might have determined a way out of this simple trap, but at least in that we were lucky. We did lose one horse to dripped poison on the trail entering a slight wound on the animal's hoof, and another horse to the wyvern's clawed feet in the ensuing chaos, but no more loss of human life on that trek.

"This serves as a warning to those of you who are wont to run unshod in the street, heedless of what your feet might encounter, especially today." Aidan at least had the good grace to redden at this, but while Grainne glanced momentarily at her own embroidered slippers, Fiona merely giggled and kicked her bare feet in the air. None seemed to take notice of the final words of his admonishment.

"Traveling in this awkward fashion, it took us almost as long returning to the town where our mission had started as it had going to the wyvern's lair, even considering the days we spent stalking the creature. The longer we traveled, the hungrier the young wyvern became and the more it balked at being dragged along. We had not thought to let it eat the horses it had killed, but when we arrived at the site of the massacre of militiamen we were relieved, if surprised, to see that the bodies of those soldiers were still virtually untouched by predators. Here, we thought, was food for our captive. While it was willing to sniff at the

4. Except in particularly dry climes, such markings would be diluted or washed off within a week, forcing frequent refurbishing circuits by the wyverns.

5. A hatchling wyvern is extremely fragile (because of its hollow bones) and completely helpless (because of its underdeveloped muscles), and cannot walk for weeks. Within a few weeks, the young wyvern becomes strong enough to kill with its poisonous sting, if its mother brings prey to the nest and ensures that it doesn't escape before the slow-acting poison kills it.

By four months, the growing wyvern can make effective attacks with claws and teeth (for 1 hp damage). More importantly, it has a strong enough grip that it can immobilize small prey itself while waiting for its poison to work. At this point, the young wyvern is a small-size creature with 1+1 Hit Dice.

Young wyverns take their first wobbling flights at six months and are accomplished flyers by nine months. By this time they have grown to be medium-sized monsters with 3+3 HD, able to inflict 1–2 hp damage with their claws or stinger, and 1–4 hp damage with a bite.

They still live in the nest, allowing their mothers to do most of their hunting for them, until they are a year and a half old. At this stage in its life, a juvenile wyvern is a large-sized creature (up to 12' long, half of that consisting of its length) with 5+5 HD, capable of inflicting 1–4 hp damage with its claws and stinger, and 1–8 hp damage with its bite.

After leaving the nest to find its own territory, an immature wyvern spends up to three years before reaching its maximum size and sexual maturity (less time if game is plentiful in three years). An independent, immature wyvern has 6+6 HD and is huge-sized, able to inflict 1–6 hp damage with claws or stinger and 2–12 hp damage with a bite.

6. An adult wyvern's stinger contains type F poison. A juvenile wyvern has weaker venom, being born with type A poison. By the time the monster can fly, it has progressed to type C or D poison. After leaving the nest to make its own way, the immature wyvern has type E poison, and its poison strengthens to type F by the time it is sexually mature, usually two to three years after leaving the nest.

Just as the potency of a wyvern's venom increases over time, so does the intensity of its foul smell and taste (to other wyverns) increase. Thus, the poison of young wyverns (whether in the form of border markings or when used in dominance battles) is less effective at driving rivals away from its territory. For this reason, immature wyverns usually employ normal fighting techniques to establish their hunting preserves, instead of resorting to non-lethal dominance battles as full adults do.

7. Wyverns have no special preference for horse-meat. Indeed, an entire horse would be far too large a meal for a an immature wyvern. Still, that doesn't mean that a young wyvern wouldn't kill a horse, given the chance, either nervously eating its fill at the sight of the kill, or ripping some more appropriate quantity of meat from the carcass and transporting that back to its lair to be eaten in safety.

bodies and even take an explorative bite, however, it would not eat this meat, although it was evident that the wyvern had eaten carrion as rank in its own cave but a few days before.[8] Still, we did eventually arrive back in the town with the captive wyvern to make our report.

Brendan paused to take a long draught of the drink held in his only hand while collecting his thoughts. Recognizing the significance of this pause, Aidan jumped in. "And this is the part where you complete the circle."

While the bard only raised an eyebrow, both of Aidan's sisters turned to him in confusion. "You know, when he makes the ending of the story come back to the beginning."

At Brendan's amused nod, Aidan continued to tell the story. "So you brought the baby wyvern back to the earl, he raised it until it was big enough to ride into battle, he flew to where the other wyverns were and killed them all, and that's how he became rich, and powerful, and famous. The end."

"An exciting ending for certain, Aidan, but not a likely one. If you'll remember the story I once told you about a nobleman attempting to tame a manticore,[9] a shortcoming in ..."

"Oh yeah," Aidan interjected, "the noble got stabbed in the back by the manticore. I guess the same could happen with a wyvern."

"Quite likely. But you are correct, Aidan, that we have come to the end of this tale. You see, we had slain the one wyvern that the nobleman had asked us to, but we knew from what we had witnessed that there was at least one more wyvern in the region. Hiring a party of adventurers to slay one troublesome monster is a reasonable proposition, but expecting them to rid an area of an entire species is another matter entirely.

"Still, when we returned to town, we gave his magical weapon to him and informed him of the death of his son. Then I proposed to do just that. For a large sum, I would tell him the secret of ridding his realm forever of the menace of wyverns. Thinking that my secret might be a weapon that he could use to enlarge his holdings, he eventually paid our fee.

"The secret was actually quite simple, once told. When I first saw the poison-markings on the prominences of the region, I had a suspicion that they might be more than mere happenstance. Once I saw those two wyverns fighting so energetically yet without actually harming each other, followed by the victor's frantic erasure of the vanquished wyvern's usurping poison-marks with its own, I was certain. Just as dogs demarcate a personal territory around their homes by spraying trees and other objects with their scent, these wyverns established their own hunting preserves using a different scent-marker: their poison.[10]

"When the intruder dared to overlay our wyvern's border-marks, it was a direct challenge to its authority, and a border-skirmish ensued. As neither combatant would be served by a fight to the death which could have left the victor injured or crippled, it was a contest for dominance. The goal was for one opponent to force the other to recognize his poison-scent in the most direct way possible; to force the other to smell, taste, and ingest his poison so that, while the loser may suffer no permanent ill-effects at the poisoning (for most poisonous creatures are also immune to their own venom), he would forever remember the taste of defeat."

"That," Grainne offered, "must be why the young wyvern wouldn't touch the bodies of the militiamen slain by its mother. It wasn't that they'd lain too long in the sun, but that they tasted of the poison of another wyvern."

"Yes, that is also why the mother was forced to carry the still-living nobleman's son to its lair," the bard responded, "The prey did not have to be living, but it did have to be untainted.

"Once that was understood and the primary wyvern of the region had been dispatched, all that was necessary to keep the town safe from other wyverns was to convince them that the primary wyvern, or its offspring, was still in control of its hunting grounds. With the juvenile wyvern safely in our custody, it was simple to extract its venom and use it to mark the borders of the lord's holdings as protection from other wyverns.

"Of course, the lord still had to provide food for his captive monster, but it was willing to eat what scraps and spoiled meat the villagers produced, and the lord slowly expanded the limits of his wyvern's protection to nearby villages and towns, charging them only an easy levy of meat for the service.

"It took some experimentation to discover the best time for the application of the poison. Furthermore, this technique offered the area no protection from other menaces, such as true dragons, but it did bring a certain degree of peace and prosperity to the lord's holdings. As his influence and possessions increased, so to did his social status, until he found himself not the lord over a single town, but the earl of whom you all have heard, whose lands expanded eventually to include this village and many others.

"And so, every year after the spring rains, it is the job of the earl's guard to repaint the wyvern watch, keeping those flying serpents from preying on his people and their property.[11]

"Interestingly," he said, fixing his gaze on Aidan, "a captured wyvern lives only some 20 years. The specimen I captured died years ago, and its replacement will surely die some few years from now. When it comes your time to take up service in the earl's levy, Aidan, it may just be time for a party to capture a new, young wyvern to replace our current protector." At the thought of his own such adventure, Aidan's face brightened.

"And," continued the storyteller, chuckling gently, "Once they capture the wyvern, maybe you'll be allowed to don the Earl's colors and a pair of thick gloves to paint poison on the wyvern watch over some village, and to impress the girls with your dashing heroics."

"Yick!" Aidan exclaimed, while Grainne merely turned her attention back to the awkward youth atop the ladder across the village green.

Spike Y. Jones has been playing the AD&D® game since 1978 and has been writing for DRAGON® Magazine *since 1986. He sees no end in sight for either activity.*

8. As all these militiamen were slain by the mother wyvern, the captured child finds the poisoned meat unpalatable, just as other forest scavengers do.

9. "The Ecology of the Manticore," *DRAGON Magazine* issue #154.

10. The average wyvern marks out a vaguely-circular territory some 25 miles across. If food is plentiful in the region, individual wyverns survive quite well with smaller territories, but when food is scarce they expand their hunting grounds considerably. As it is more difficult for a single wyvern to patrol a larger expanse, they can form loose partnerships, with two or more adults sharing their territories and working together to take down game, such as elephants or true dragons, too large for any individual wyvern to handle.

Such "pack wyverns" can also, over time, develop pack tactics such as those used by wolves, but this occurs only rarely, and if the amount of game in the area increases the wyverns quickly abandon their grouping tendency to become solitary creatures again.

11. As noted above, the poison is likely to be washed off of the Earl's wyvern watches by lighter rains throughout the year. Still, as young wyverns leave their parents' nests to carve out their own hunting areas in the spring, such a springtime application of deterrent poison may cause them to avoid a protected region, thinking it to be occupied by some other wyvern, never realizing that they could find the same area unmarked only a few weeks or months later.

Some destiny

of the most horrible kind

hangs over me,

and I must live

to fulfill it,

or surely

I should have died...

—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

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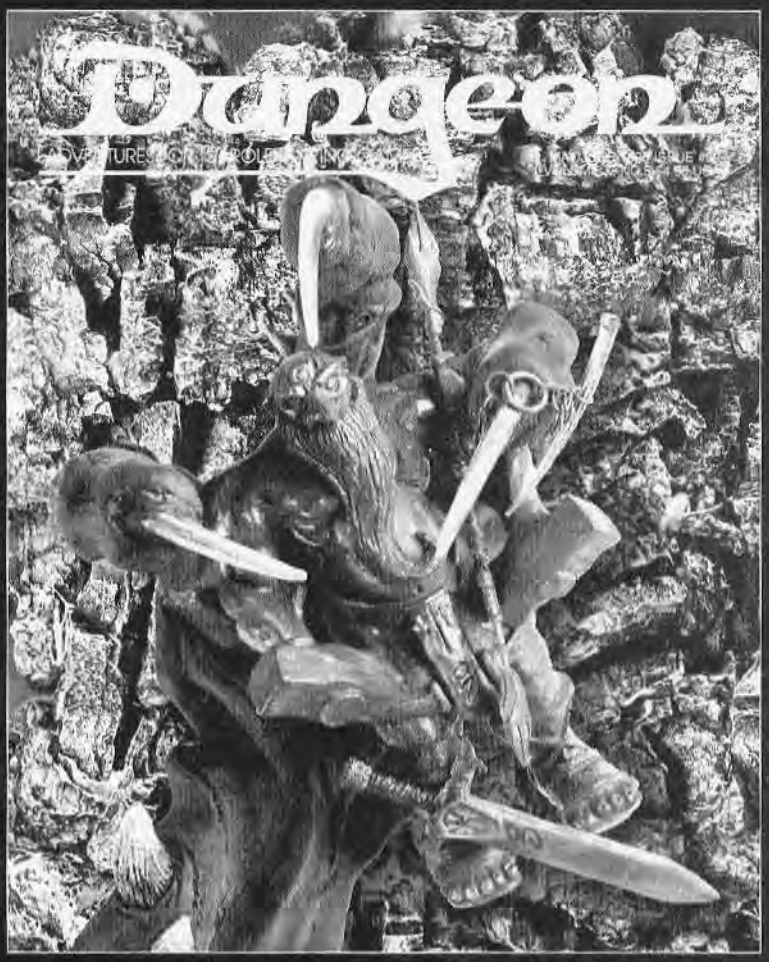

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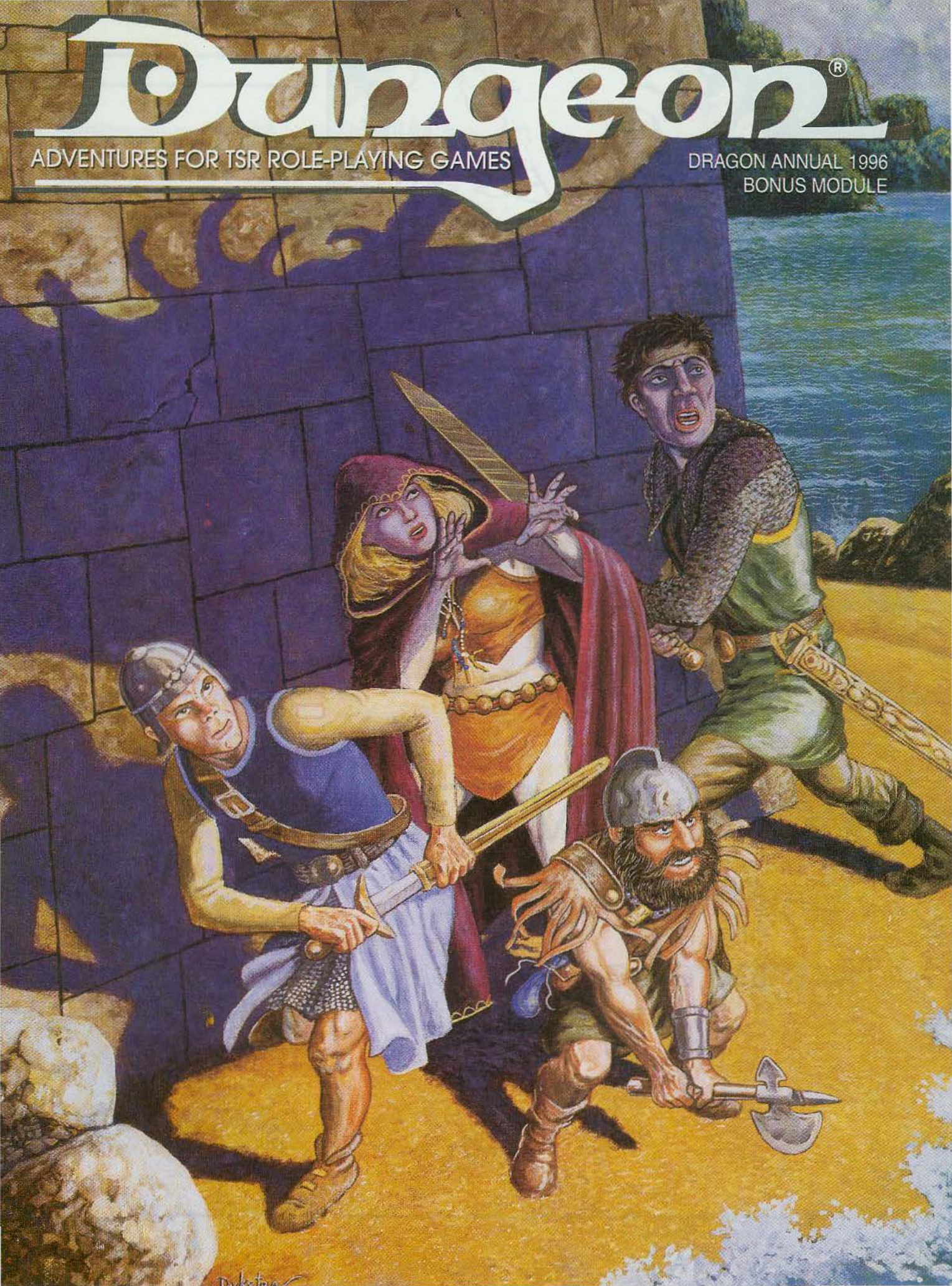


WYRMSMERE

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Here there be dragons

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

Readers of our sister publication recognize the name of Chris Perkins as one of the magazine's most prolific and talented designers. There was little doubt who we would ask to write the module for the first DRAGON® Magazine *Annual. For more AD&D® game scenarios from Chris and many other fine designers, see* DUNGEON® Adventures, *published every other month.*

"Wyrmsmere" is an AD&D adventure designed for four or more PCs of levels 4–7 (about 25 total levels). The predominantly good-aligned party should include at least one Wizard with the ability to cast *dispel magic.* A temperate wilderness setting is preferred, although the module can be adapted to suit other climes. DMs are encouraged to change the names of people and places to suit their campaigns.

In "Wyrmsmere," the PCs are hired by Aryzon Silvercloud (a procurer of adventurers' gear) to retrieve three magical potions stolen by a group of NPC adventurers. The PCs track their quarry to a remote keep, where they learn that the NPC adventurers have been coerced into service by a dark naga, who uses them to gather magical items for her growing collection. A rocky island in the middle of the lake serves as the naga's lair, wherein the PCs must confront the monster to retrieve the lost potions.

For the Players

Your adventures have brought you to the fortified town of Neriendor, located on the fringe of civilization near the edge of a great wilderness. Beyond the stone palisades of the town lies a broad expanse of coniferous trees and towering, snow-capped mountains enclosing ice-cold lakes of glittering hue. The untamed frontier seems eerily quiet, yet within the walls of the town, activity and excitement prevail.

Not far from the town square, nestled between two larger buildings, is a small but well-maintained shop bearing the name "Aryzon's Adventuring Gear." Displayed in the shop's window are dozens of familiar items, including a full suit of plate mail armor and several stylish weapons.

The adventure begins when the PCs enter Aryzon's shop. Within they see an impressive array of adventuring items,

from common items like torches, ropes, and wilderness maps to more expensive items like weapons, shields, and armor. The DM may flesh out the exact contents, keeping in mind that Aryzon does not openly display or sell magical items. His prices are equivalent to those listed in the *PHB*.

Aryzon appears as a handsome, middle-aged half-elf with silver hair and piercing blue eyes. He welcomes new visitors warmly and respectfully. If the characters require accommodation, he can recommend the best inn with the cheapest rates. Having played his zither in these establishments, Aryzon is quite familiar with the quality of the inns and taverns of Neriendor.

While the PCs first enter the shop, Aryzon casts his *know alignment* spell upon them. Aryzon conceals his intentions very well, although he is somewhat preoccupied with a recent theft perpetrated by the last group of adventurers who visited his shop. After casting his spell to verify the party's alignment, Aryzon approaches the PCs with an appealing offer.

For the Dungeon Master

Aryzon Silvercloud seems to be nothing more than a benevolent procurer of adventurer's gear with a weakness for fairy tales and a talent for playing the zither. During off hours, Aryzon and his musical band entertain patrons at the local pubs. What none of the people of Neriendor realize is that Aryzon is the offspring of a silver dragon male and a cloud dragon female. He mingles with humans in the guise of a middle-aged half-elf, secretly guarding the town against evil.

Aryzon Silvercloud (mature adult silver/cloud dragon): INT genius (18); AL LN; AC –5; MV 9, fly 36 (C), jump 3; HD 17; hp 102; THAC0 4; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d10+7/1d10+7/3d12+7; SA breathe ice blast (140′ × 30′ × 30′; 8d6+14 hp damage) or paralytic cloud (50′ × 40′ × 20′; paralysis lasts 1d8+7 rounds), tail slap, wing buffet, kick, cast spells; SD *polymorph self* (three times/day), assume cloud form (AC –8; MV fly 12 (A); MR 50%), immune to cold, cast spells; MR 35%; SZ G (82′ long, 36′ tail); ML 17; XP 22,000; *MM*/79 (dragon, silver), *MM*/81 (dragon, cloud).

Spells (cast at 9th-level): *color spray, comprehend languages; detect invisibility, know alignment, clairvoyance, protection from normal missiles.*

Dragon abilities: *call lightning* (twice/day), *control winds* (3 times/day), *create water* (twice/day), *control weather* (once/day), *feather fall* (twice/day), *obscurement* (3 times/day), *solid fog* (twice/day), *stinking cloud* (twice/day), *wall of fog* (once/day).

Dragon crossbreeds are uncommon among species that share similar territory and climate. Aryzon possesses the gentle kindness and artistry of his father. His business savvy and keen negotiating sense are characteristics of his mother. Concealing his identity as a dragon, Aryzon shares rumors and hearsay with adventurers who visit his shop or any of the pubs he frequents. On occasion, he buys and sells maps leading to the reported lairs of evil monsters, knowing that adventurers will eagerly explore these lairs and remove the threat.

Among the more dangerous monsters lurking in the wilderness is Toxin, a green dragon. Years ago, Aryzon and Toxin took to the skies in a bitter altercation. Toxin has since learned to give Aryzon and the town of Neriendor a wide berth. Nevertheless, should the green dragon rear its ugly head, Aryzon knows he must prepare himself for the inevitable confrontation. A year ago, he procured three *potions of green dragon control* from a friendly bard. The bard's plan to slay the green dragon was swept aside with the untimely demise of his fellow adventurers, all of whom were slain while searching for the dragon's lair in the wilderness.

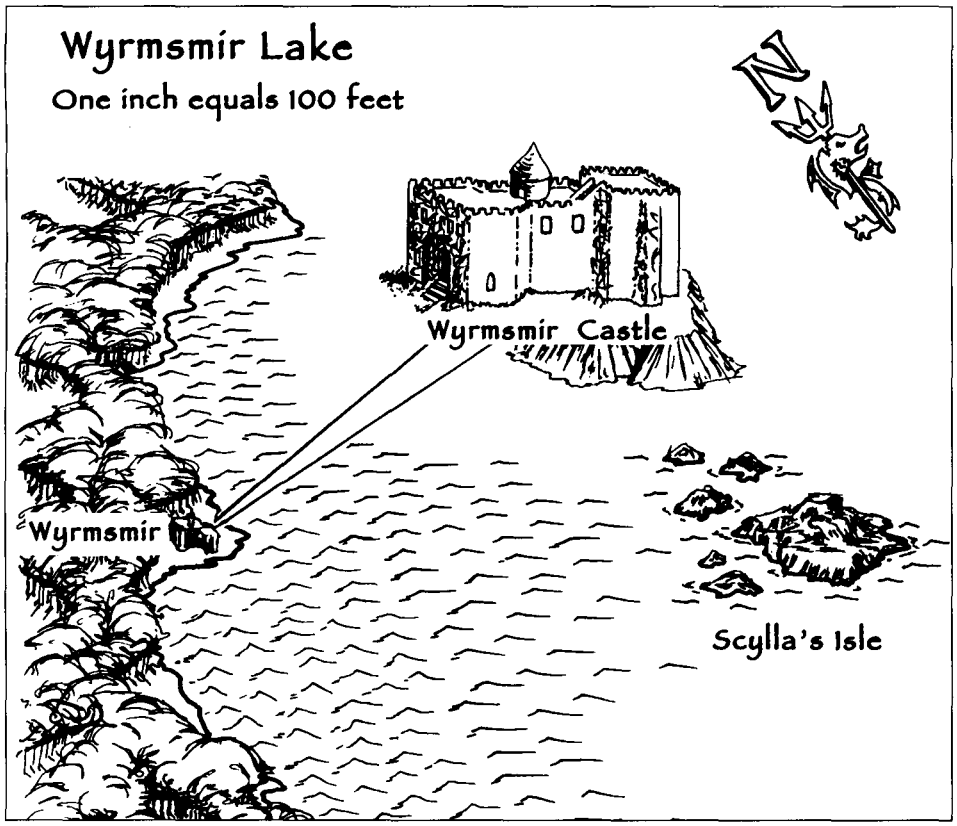
The adventurers arrive at Aryzon's shop hoping to restock their adventuring supplies. It's conceivable that the PCs have heard rumors about the green dragon and arrive in Neriendor to investigate. Aryzon can confirm these rumors and provide clues to the green dragon's whereabouts. However, Aryzon does not pit adventurers of limited ability against such a terrible creature — not without the magical potions to help them.

Three days ago, Aryzon's potions were stolen by a trio of adventurers consisting of a halfling thief, a human mage, and a human fighter. While Aryzon was busy talking to the fighter, the halfling made off with the tiny box of potions. Aryzon knew the wizard and fighter from their frequent visits to his shop, and their turn to thievery has left him rather mystified. Asking around town, Aryzon discovered that the three NPCs were members of a larger, six-man party that left three weeks ago on a quest to Wyrmsmere, a freshwater lake located beyond the mountains. Aryzon does not want to see his potions misused. He fears that the adventurers may use them to control Toxin for their own ends. The only thing keeping the green dragon at bay is mighty Aryzon, but even he cannot keep Toxin from attacking the town if the green dragon succumbs to the influence of the potions.

The renegade adventurers are not the villains of this piece. The true antagonist is Scylla, a dark naga with a fetish for magical items. Scylla's island, located in the middle of the lake, is honeycombed with caves that serve as the naga's lair. The fighter, mage and thief — along with their three companions — were merely adventurers hunting for fame and fortune. They stumbled upon the naga's abode while exploring a tunnel beneath desolated Wyrmsmere Castle. The three survivors were later *charmed* and sent back to the city to steal treasure for the naga. Upon entering Aryzon's shop, the mage discreetly used the naga's *wand of magic detection* to locate the magical potions while the fighter kept Aryzon distracted.

Aryzon can't leave the city; Toxin may learn that the potions are gone and decide to attack. Instead, Aryzon sends the PCs to retrieve the potions from Wyrmsmere Castle. He offers them his *crystal claw* — a handsomely-crafted ornament that he inherited from his mother's hoard. (See "New Magical Items" sidebar for details.) The *claw* was stolen by the same thief who took the potions. The PCs may keep this valuable treasure if they find it. In addition, Aryzon agrees to outfit the party for free, providing them with all the basic equipment, armor and weapons they require. (The DM should be fairly liberal with weapons and armor at this point — anything non-magical is acceptable.)

Scylla the naga collects and hoards magical items. She is unaware of the green dragon and has no immediate use for Aryzon's potions. Scylla has swallowed them, containing the potions in her internal sack to keep them (and her other precious magical treasures) out of enemy reach. The naga now spends her days ogling the glittering facets of Aryzon's *crystal claw* in an attempt to discern its magical properties.



Aryzon does not know about the naga, nor can he anticipate what dangers the PCs may face en route to Wyrmsmere. He relays the following pieces of information:

❖ The *potions of green dragon control* were taken by three human adventurers: a human fighter, halfling thief, and human wizard. The wizard's name is Pellerax Muralian, and the fighter is named Drake. The halfling's identity is unknown.

❖ There are three other members in Muralian's adventuring band — a dwarf and two other human fighters, one of whom is named Elan. These three haven't been seen since they and their comrades set out to explore Wyrmsmere several weeks ago. Aryzon knows Elan but not the other two.

❖ Toxin, the old green dragon, lives in the woods northwest of Neriendor. The *potions of green dragon control* were purchased to ensure that Aryzon can deal with Toxin should the dragon threaten or endanger the town.

❖ An innkeeper recalls that Pellerax Muralian and his companions were friendly and well-behaved. They were all excited at the prospect of exploring the old keep, having heard rumors of treasure hidden within. (Aryzon now believes the adventurers may be using the old keep as their base of operations. He cannot ascertain what drove them to return to town to steal his potions, unless they had intentions of visiting the green dragon's lair at some point.)

❖ Many locals believe that Wyrmsmere is the lair of a water dragon. (Aryzon can neither confirm nor deny these reports, although the lake clearly took its name from this legend. Aryzon has never seen Wyrmsmere's enigmatic "water dragon" and doubts its existence.)

In Search of Potions

If the PCs agree to help Aryzon, he provides them with a wilderness map showing the quickest route from Neriendor to Wyrmsmere. The lake lies north beyond the mountains, roughly two days' travel from the town on horseback. Aryzon pulls some strings with the town's stablemaster to ensure that each PC has an able mount, at no cost to the party, should the need arise.

The PCs may suspect that Pellerax and his companions stole the potions so that they could enslave Toxin and perhaps plunder the dragon's hoard. Aryzon has considered this possibility. He discourages the party from venturing to Toxin' lair, however, suggesting they journey to Wyrmsmere first in the hopes of intercepting Pellerax and his companions there. This adventure assumes the PCs take Aryzon's advice.

Wyrmsmere

Unless the DM wishes to test the strength of the PCs with a random forest encounter, they reach Wyrmsmere without incident. Read the following description as the PCs behold the lake and nearby keep:

> Nestled between the mountains two days north of Neriendor is a freshwater lake covered by a pale shroud of mist. Rising from its crisp cobalt waters are several rocky outcroppings, their sharp peaks poking just above the foggy veil. On the northwestern edge of the lake, set among a patch of coniferous trees, stands a small moss-encrusted keep made from blocks of dark grey stone. The waters of the lake lap gently against the rocks that form the base of the keep. A thin plume of smoke rises from the keep's battlements.

The smoke rising from the roof suggests that the keep is occupied. None of the four individuals living inside the keep patrol the roof for fear of being attacked by the perytons that live atop Scylla's Isle. The naga cannot *charm* monsters but nevertheless values the perytons as guardians. The perytons have become extremely territorial, attacking anyone who tries to cross or fly over the lake.

The female perytons are particularly aggressive, having recently given birth to two fledglings. (These young, irritable perytons cannot fly and have AC 10, 2 hp, and no attacks.) PCs who search the top of the rocky isle find not only the perytons' nest but also their accumulated treasure: a *shield +2,* a *helm of comprehend languages and read magic,* a 100-gp beryl, and a non-magical short sword with a *Nystul's magic aura* cast upon it.

Perytons (4): INT average; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12, fly 21 (C); HD 4; hp 28, 24, 20, 19; THAC0 15 (includes +2 bonus to attacks); #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SA swoop; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; SZ M; ML 16; XP 270; *MM*/286.

Wyrmsmere Castle

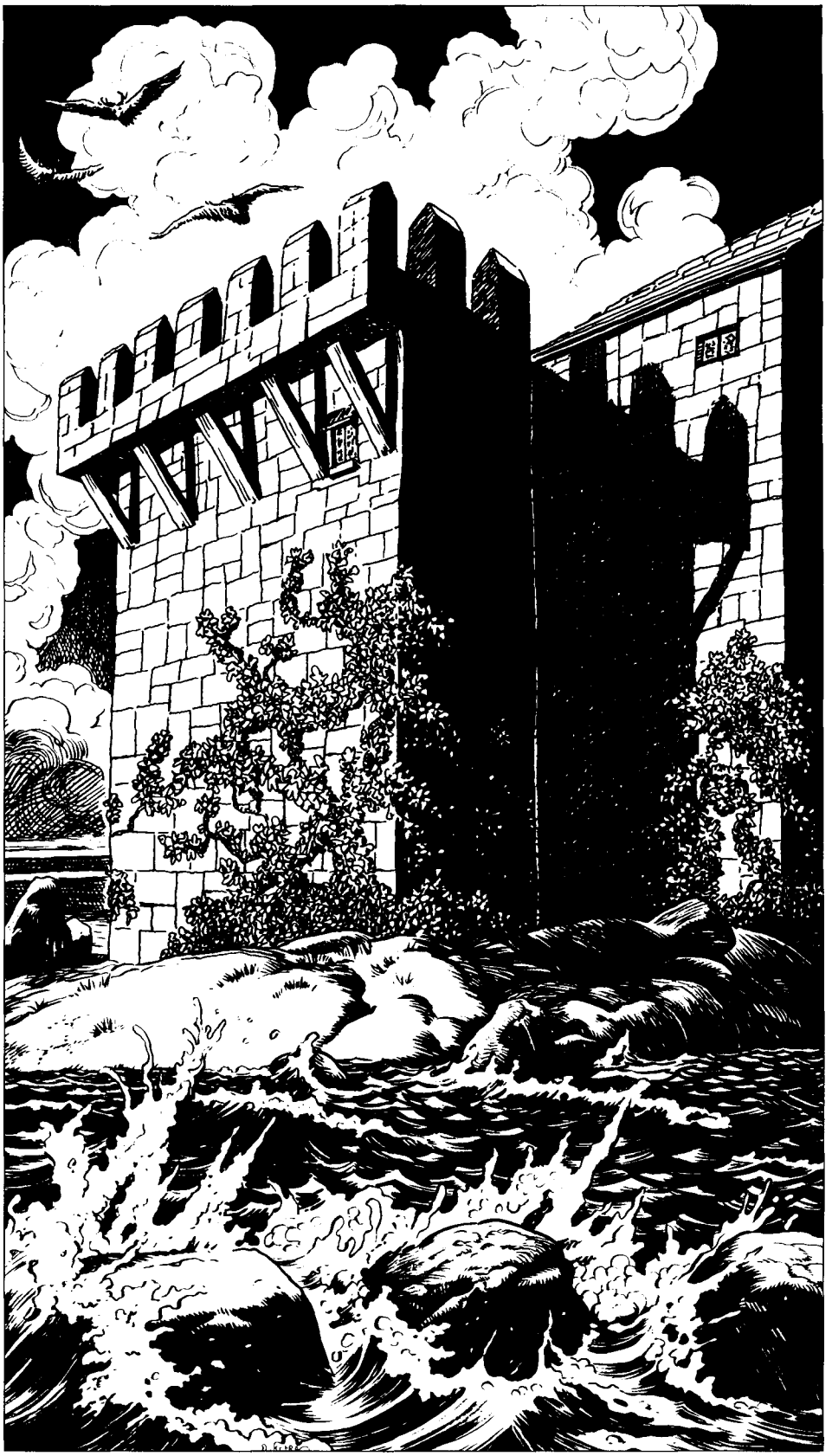
Wyrmsmere Castle was built by a wealthy nobleman from Neriendor as a summer retreat. The nobleman's legacy fell to ruin after several financial misadventures, and the keep was eventually plundered and abandoned. The structure remains intact despite three decades of neglect.

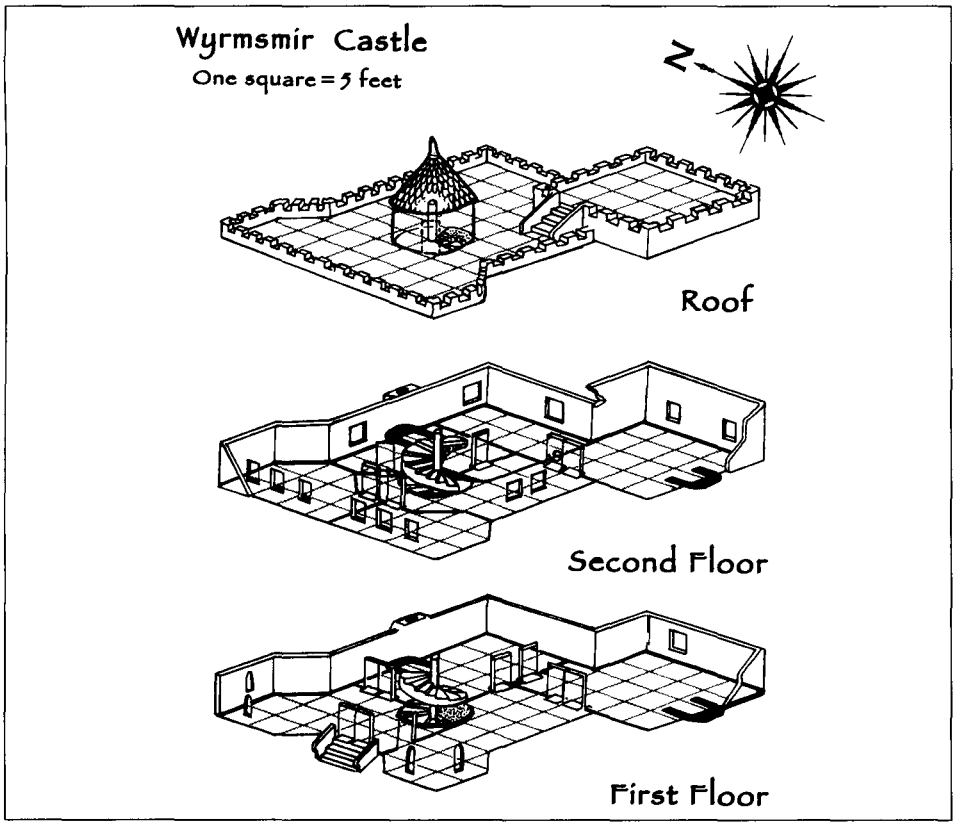
The keep is currently occupied by four *charmed* adventurers: the wizard Pellerax Muralian, the fighter Drake Sakellaros, the dwarven fighter Onyx Rocksplitter, and the halfling thief Lucky Nimblefoot. The remains of the other two members of Pellerax's band (Elan Drell and Bristum Greyshard) can be found in areas **13** and **17** respectively. Statistics for Pellerax and his three surviving companions are listed in the areas where they are commonly found.

Any NPC freed from the naga's *charm* agrees to help the PCs subdue his *charmed* comrades. Freed NPCs can also help the PCs retrieve Aryzon's potions. The NPCs know how to reach Scylla's lair via the underground passage (areas **10–15**). Scylla requires them to return to her isle every few days so she can recast her *charm person* spells. Once they become aware of intruders, *charmed* NPCs rally to slay the trespassers, using their combat experience and magical items to best advantage.

The NPCs are not expecting intruders. Nevertheless, the main entrance (to area **1**) is barred from the inside to keep out wayward visitors. If the PCs knock on the doors, the puzzled NPCs grab their gear and take up defensive positions throughout the keep. Pellerax uses his *wizard eye* spell to ascertain the strength and size of the party. If the PCs number more than three, Pellerax casts a *monster summoning I* spell from a scroll and summons 2d4 blood hawks to attack the party outside the keep. He also renders Drake invisible and instructs the fighter to stand guard in the entrance foyer, just in case the PCs force their way inside.

Blood hawks (2d4): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; SA eye peck (roll of 1 on a d10); SZ S; ML 12; XP 120; *MM*/27 (bird). These blood hawks attack for 11 rounds (the duration of the *monster summoning I* spell) and then vanish.





1. Entrance Foyer. A *knock* spell can open the barred doors. Directly across from the entrance is a staircase that ascends to the second floor and descends to the cellar (area **10**). The room is bare save for some pegs along the walls whereupon shields, swords, and banners once hung. In the north corner rests a padded leather chair and a small oak table shrouded in dust.

If the NPCs are alerted to the party's arrival, Drake is standing near the entrance (rendered invisible by Pellerax's spell), ready to attack intruders with his morning star. If possible, he attempts to close the doors behind the party, thus trapping them inside. He is soon joined by the dwarven fighter in area **3.** If the PCs enter the keep unnoticed, Drake is encountered with Pellerax in area **6.**

Drake Sakellaros (6th-level human fighter): AL N (charmed); AC 2; MV 9; F5; hp 42; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +2 (specialization), +1 (Strength), +3 (morning star); S 17 (+1/+1), D 15, C 15, I 11, W 9, Ch 10; ML 14 (17 while *charmed*); XP 420 (double if captured or rescued); plate mail, *morning star +3* (specialized), short-sword, heavy crossbow (kept in area **4**), pouch containing 25 gp (taken from area **8**).

2. Dining Hall. An iron chandelier hangs from the chamber ceiling, its candles removed. Beneath the chandelier are the splintered fragments of an oak dining table and eight chairs. The ceiling is black with soot, and faded marks on the stone walls indicate where pictures and tapestries once hung.

This area is currently unoccupied. Footprints suggest that this area is well-traversed. Drake often passes through this chamber to reach area **4.**

3. Kitchen. Most of the contents of this room are intact. Two food-stained tables rest in the middle of the floor, while two empty cupboards stand against the wall by the fireplace. Above the fireplace hang several corroded cooking implements, while inside the hearth dangles a heavy iron cooking pot half-filled with an oily, non-flammable and unsavory residue. Positioned near the door to the pantry is an eating table surrounded by four plain wooden chairs. The pantry is lined with shelves containing sacks of rations brought by Pellerax and his companions. The shelves are otherwise bare.

Occupying this chamber is Onyx, the charmed dwarven fighter. The dwarf recently noticed a loose flagstone in one corner of the kitchen and is in the process of lifting it up to search underneath. If interrupted by the arrival of intruders, Onyx gently lowers the flagstone back into place and waits near the doors to area **1.** If combat erupts between the PCs and Drake, Onyx cracks open the doors and assesses the strength of his foes. He then charges forth with his mace. If forced to retreat, the dwarf uses his dwarven *cloak of stone melding* (see "New Magical Items" for details) to phase into the nearest wall, emerging to attack when he has surprise (–3 to opponent's roll).

Under the loose flagstone, beneath a layer of dirt, is a sack containing 60 pp left by the keep's previous owner.

Onyx Rocksplitter (3rd-level dwarf fighter): AL CG (*charmed*); AC 4; MV 6; F3; hp 27; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength); S 17 (+1/+1), D 9, C 16, I 10, W 17, Ch 9; SA +1 to hit large-sized humanoids; SD +4 to saves vs. poison and magic; infravision; ML 14 (17 while charmed); XP 120 (double if captured or rescued); chain mail, shield, footman's mace, dwarven *cloak of stone melding,* gold griffon brooch (taken from area **8;** worth 125 gp).

4. Plundered Library. The walls of this room are lined with bookshelves, many of them smashed and broken. The tomes that once packed the shelves were removed or destroyed years ago. A bare, water-stained desk rests beneath the window, while positioned in front of the fireplace are two padded leather chairs. Bits of wool stuffing poke through age-worn gashes in the leather.

Drake's bedroll has been stretched out in front of the ash-filled hearth. On the floor next to the bedroll is the fighter's heavy crossbow and 10 normal bolts.

5. Dusty Bedrooms. These dusty, web-filled chambers are empty and unoccupied. One of the rooms (DM's determination) contains the mutilated remains of three large spiders slain by Pellerax and his companions when they first arrived at the keep. (The spiders' poison was extracted by the halfling thief and put to use in area **14.**) Against one wall sits an empty wooden

chest with the lid removed. The lid is nowhere to be found.

6. Pellerax's Chamber. This bedchamber is warmed by a fire in the hearth. The scent of burning hickory and pine fills both the room and the outside hall.

The door to this room is slightly ajar — enough so that Pellerax can hear noises in the hall. The wizard is naturally suspicious and rarely lets down his guard. If alerted to the presence of intruders, he imbibes his *potion of invisibility,* casts a *stoneskin* spell upon himself, and makes his way downstairs (using his *wizard eye* to peer ahead of him). If Drake is present, Pellerax renders the fighter invisible and instructs him to remain nearby). If necessary, Pellerax casts his *wizard lock* upon the entrance doors in area **1** to keep intruders from entering or escaping, before casting his *detect invisibility* spell to look for hidden antagonists.

Pellerax uses his wand sparingly, never exhausting the final charge. He prefers to cast offensive spells. If he loses his *stoneskin* spell and becomes vulnerable to attack, Pellerax retreats to the rooftop, casts his *water breathing* spell, and dives into the lake. (His *ring of warmth* protects him from the cold waters.) Swimming to Scylla's island, Pellerax warns the naga of intruders. If he makes it to Scylla, the naga cannot be surprised by the PCs.

Pellerax is one day from making a new saving throw against Scylla's *charm person* spell. If the PCs capture Pellerax and detain him for 12 hours or more, the DM should make a new saving throw for the mage. On a roll of 10 or higher, the *charm* is broken, and Pellerax reverts to his normal, benevolent self.

Pellerax Muralian (7th-level human transmuter): AL NG (charmed); AC 2; MV 12; W7 (specialist); hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; S 14, D 15, C 15, I 16, W 12, Ch 13; ML 10 (12 while *charmed*); XP 975 (double if captured or rescued); *wand of polymorphing* (5 charges; command word "Morph"), *wand of magic detection* (loaned to Pellerax by Scylla; 22 charges; command word "Akazaz"), *bracers of defense AC 5, cloak of protection +2, scroll* (*slow* and *monster summoning I* cast at 9th-level), two *potions* (*healing* and *invisibility,* both given by Scylla), *ring of warmth* (taken from area **8**).

Spells: *burning hands, detect magic, magic missile, shocking grasp, unseen servant; detect invisibility, fog cloud, invisibility, levitate; haste, lightning bolt, water breathing; stoneskin, wizard eye.*

Pellerax's room contains few furnishings. A wooden bedframe (upon which the wizard has spread his bedroll) rests against one wall, while a dusty bearskin rug lies on the floor under the windows. Resting on the fireplace mantle is a small wooden coffer with the name "Aryzon" etched into its lid. This box once contained three *potions of green dragon control,* but the potions have since been removed and given to the naga (see area **19**).

The chamber's closet contains a few hooks, a bare shelf, and a wooden chest that Pellerax took from area **8.** The chest is *wizard locked* shut and holds Pellerax's traveling spellbook. The tome contains the above-listed spells plus *feather fall, read magic, spider climb, continual light, knock, rope trick, fly, gust of wind, secret page, tongues,* and *dimension door.* Pellerax has used *secret page* spells to disguise the tome's contents as pictures of rare mushrooms and other fungi. The chest also contains a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles (worth 90 gp) and sack of 85 ep.

7. Master Bedroom. This room is currently being used by Onyx the dwarf and Lucky the halfling. The two NPCs share the large bed positioned beneath one of the windows. Their bedrolls are stretched out over the bed's moldering mattress. Near Onyx's side of the bed lies a small keg of wine that the dwarf retrieved from the kitchen. A tattered tapestry depicting a mountain landscape hangs on the northeast wall, obscuring a secret door leading to area **8.**

Above the fireplace hangs a large non-magical shield emblazoned with a gold griffon emblem. Removing the shield reveals a shallow compartment in the wall. The compartment is empty, its prior contents having been removed by the astute halfling thief. Near the fireplace are two empty wooden chests that were removed from area **8** and plundered. The halfling took the locks from the chests.

8. Secret Chamber. Pellerax and his companions found this secret chamber and removed anything of value, including the small chest currently located in area **6** and the silver figurine placed by Lucky in area **11B.** Scattered upon the floor are several fragments of plate armor (the remains of an automaton destroyed by the NPCs), a non-magical morning star (the automaton's weapon), and a finely-crafted wooden statue draped in cobwebs. The statue depicts a young woman wearing an ivy wreath with an owl perched on her left arm. It is not valuable.

9. Rooftop. From the rooftop, PCs have an unobstructed view of the misty lake and the grim crags of the dark naga's island. Unless the PCs have taken the precaution of rendering themselves invisible, there is a cumulative 5% chance/round that 1d4 perytons atop Scylla's isle spot them and move to attack. The perytons require only one round to reach the keep. There is a 50% chance that the attacking perytons take an extra round to fly 100′ above the keep to make a swooping attack (+2 to hit).

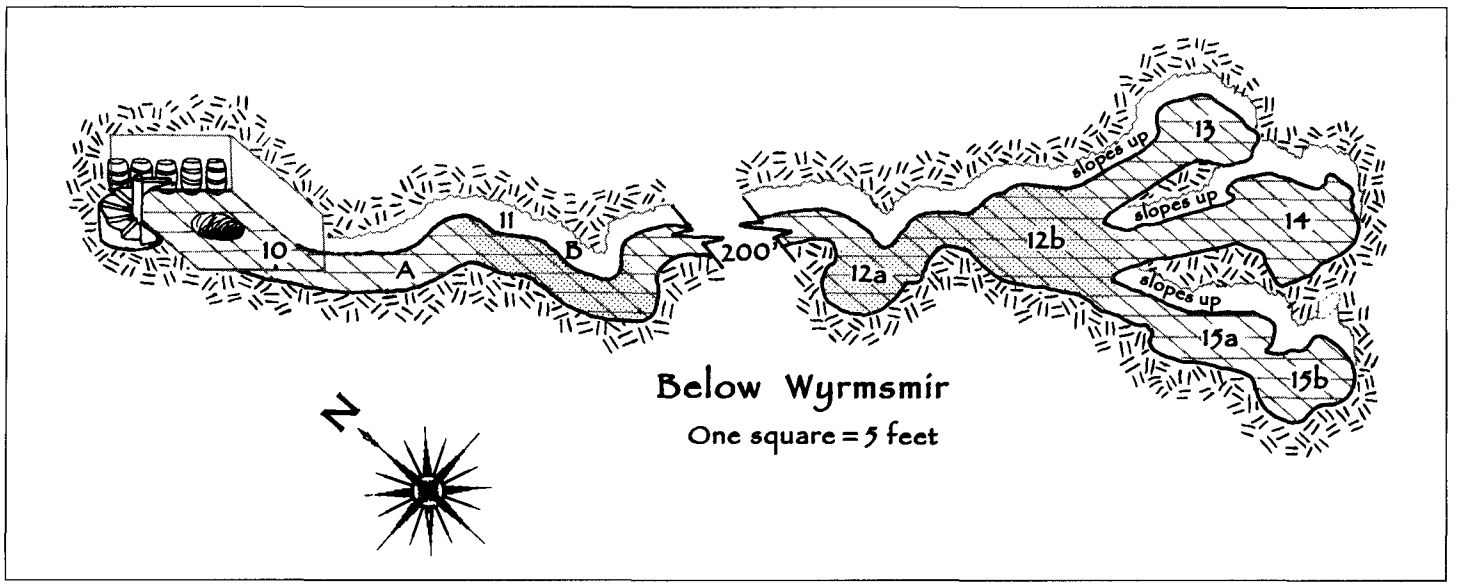
The southernmost section of the roof is 5′ higher than the rest of the keep. The 4′-high battlements surrounding the roof provide 75% cover against ground-based attacks but afford no protection against the attacking perytons.

Below Wyrmsmere

10. Cellar. The spiral staircase ends before a wooden door that has been left open a crack. Firelight spills through the open portal, courtesy of Lucky Nimblefoot's small lantern. PCs who listen at the door before they enter may hear the halfling thief humming softly to himself, depending on whether he is surprised. If combat erupts on the main floor of the keep, the halfling hears the ruckus and prepares for intruders as outlined below.

Six empty ale barrels rest against the northeast and southwest walls of this cellar. If Lucky hears the sounds of intruders approaching, he drinks his *potion of invisibility,* climbs into one of the barrels and watches the room through a small spigot hole.

Lucky's small lantern rests on the floor directly in front of a 5′-diameter circular pit. The pit descends 20′, opening into a 15′ high cave directly beneath the cellar. A 50′ rope has been fastened to the ceiling by a large hook, and characters may use this rope to climb down. If Lucky has time, he slices the rope with his dagger, causing it to snap if 100+ lbs. of weight is applied.



Lucky Nimblefoot (3rd-level halfling thief): AL NG (*charmed*); AC 3; MV 6; T3; hp 18; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 12, D 18, C 15, I 13, W 8, Ch 11; SA backstab for double damage; +1 to hit with sling or thrown weapon; SD thief abilities; +4 to save vs. magical attacks; ML 10; XP 175 (double if captured or rescued); leather armor, *ring of protection +1* (taken from area **8**), *wand of wonder* (loaned by Scylla; 16 charges; command word "Ixxilflix"), *stone of good luck, potion of invisibility* (given by Scylla), sling with 15 bullets, dagger, good-quality lock (–10% chance to pick; taken from area **8**).

Thief abilities: PP 50%, OL 50%, FRT 45%, MS 50%, HS 50%, DN 30%, CW 45%, RL –5%. Lucky also has the following non-weapon proficiencies that may come into play: tumbling, set snares, swimming, and ventriloquism.

Lucky uses Scylla's *wand of wonder* indiscriminately, undeterred by the results. (See *DMG* for possible outcomes.) To use the wand, he simply pokes the tip through the hole in his barrel and whispers the command word. If seriously threatened, Lucky scampers out of the barrel and dives into the central pit, relying on his tumbling proficiency to negate damage. His *stone of good luck* gives him +1 (+5% where applicable) on all dice rolls involving factors such as saving, slipping, dodging and the like.

11. Roughly-Hewn Tunnel. The 8′ high tunnel leading from the keep's cellar (area **10**) has been rigged with traps by the industrious halfling thief. The tunnel is wet and descends at an angle of approximately 20°. The initial descent is treacherous; PCs who fail a Dexterity check slip and slide all the down into the muddy water at the bottom of the passage (suffering 1d4 hp damage). Those with the tumbling proficiency who make a successful check negate damage. Those who avoid slipping must still contend with a trip wire rigged 15′ down the tunnel (marked **A** on the map); failure to detect the wire causes the first PC to trip and fall, suffering damage.

A 35′ section of the tunnel has been flooded by the lake. The floor of the passage is uneven and filled to a depth of 1d4 feet (roll every 5′). Smaller-than-human-sized individuals move at half their normal speed through the water unless they have the swimming proficiency. If Lucky was forced to flee down the tunnel, he swims through the murky water (MV 6) and waits for the PCs in area **14.**

PCs carrying torches or lanterns or other light sources spot something gleaming on a narrow ledge half-way down the flooded section of tunnel (marked B on the map). At this point, Lucky has placed a silver statuette taken from area **8.** The statuette depicts a young woman with feathery wings (worth 30 gp). The halfling has rigged a dart-loaded spring trap under the muck 5′ further along the passage, with a fine black wire tied around the statuette's base. The wire has been rendered invisible by Pellerax (imposing a penalty of –15% to thieves' Find Traps ability). Lucky has set the trap in such a way that lifting the statuette tugs the wire just enough to release the three darts (THAC0 15; Dmg 1d3 each). Characters who ignore the statuette and continue onward have a 50% chance of accidentally knocking over the submerged dart mechanism. Failing that, there's still a 25% chance that the trap is inadvertently set off by their passage. The NPCs are aware of the mechanism and carefully sidestep it.

12. Flooded Caves. The tunnel widens, forming a pair of flooded caves. The water's depth varies from 2′ to 5′ (roll 1d4+1 every 5′). In cave **12A,** Lucky has carved the words, "BEWARE OF FISH" in a visible place on the wall. There is nothing lurking in the water, and the message is intended only to distress the PCs.

Area **12B** is a circular cave roughly 10′ high and 15′ in diameter. Water drips from the ceiling, resonating throughout the cave and beyond. Three tunnels rise from the water, sloping upwards to areas **13–15.** If Lucky has made it to area **14** ahead of the party, he uses his Detect Noise ability to listen for the party's approach. (He receives a +25% bonus to the roll if the PCs are wading through the mucky water.) Peering down the sloped tunnel, he uses his ventriloquism proficiency to throw his voice, making it sound like he's whispering to himself in area **13.** If this fails to mislead the PCs, Lucky stands at the top of the tunnel and uses

his *wand of wonder,* hoping to trigger an effect that ensures the party's demise.

13. Deadly Jelly. Near the mouth of this cave lie the skeletal remains of Elan Drell, a former member of Pellerax's band. Elan was killed and his flesh devoured by the monster that lurks in the cave. All that remains are Elan's bones, his suit of chain mail, a helmet, and a magical *footman's flail +1.* After Elan's ill-fated encounter with the creature, Pellerax and his companions chose not to explore this area further.

This damp cave is occupied by a mustard jelly that resembles a brownish pool of water covering almost the entire floor. The only clue to its presence is a faint acrid odor reminiscent of blooming mustard plants. The jelly attacks with a single thrusting pseudopod and excretes a lethargy-causing enzyme the same round it attacks. The enzyme takes the form of an invisible vapor cloud 10′ in diameter.

Mustard jelly: INT average; AL N; AC 4; MV 9; HD 7+14; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 5d4; SA toxic vapor (save vs. poison or be slowed for 2 rounds); splits into two smaller jellies (24 hp each); SD +1 or better weapons to hit; impervious to electrical attacks; magic missiles increase jelly's hit points (by 1d4+1 hp/missile); cold inflicts half damage; MR 10%; SZ L (9′ diameter); ML 13; XP 4,000 (2,000 for each half); *MM*/276 (ooze/slime/jelly).

Half of the mustard jelly pursues prey as far as area **12B,** while the other half remains in the cave to ensure its own survival.

14. Lucky's Cave. If Lucky has eluded the PCs so far, he withdraws into this cave and either waits for the PCs to show up in area **12B** or Hide in Shadows and backstab anyone entering the cave. Lucky uses Scylla's *wand of wonder* to cause as much trouble as possible. If reduced to 5 hp or fewer, Lucky surrenders and agrees to lead the party to the naga. Given a chance to escape, Lucky seizes the opportunity; otherwise, he fulfills his agreement and leads the PCs to area **19.**

This damp cave contains four shady alcoves. In the back of one alcove, Lucky has placed a sturdy wooden chest. The halfling has sealed the chest with a lock taken from area **8** (normal chances to pick). The chest contains a spring-loaded dart mechanism similar to the one in area **11B.** The trap is sprung when the lid of the chest is opened, discharging three darts (THAC0 15; Dmg 1d3 each). These darts are coated with venom extracted from the large spiders in area **5** (Type A poison, save at +2). The chest also holds 150 cp.

If Lucky is captured but still charmed, he feigns ignorance regarding the chest's contents, claiming he cannot pick the lock. However, he can easily disarm the trap if forced to do so at swordpoint.

15. Bottle Cave. PCs approaching area **15A** from the lower caves feel a gentle rush of fresh air. (The air enters Scylla's lair above and descends into the lower caves via the hole in the ceiling of area **15B.**) Dwarves or PCs with the direction sense proficiency can determine approximately where they are in relation to the keep (i.e. somewhere beneath the lake's small cluster of rocky islands).

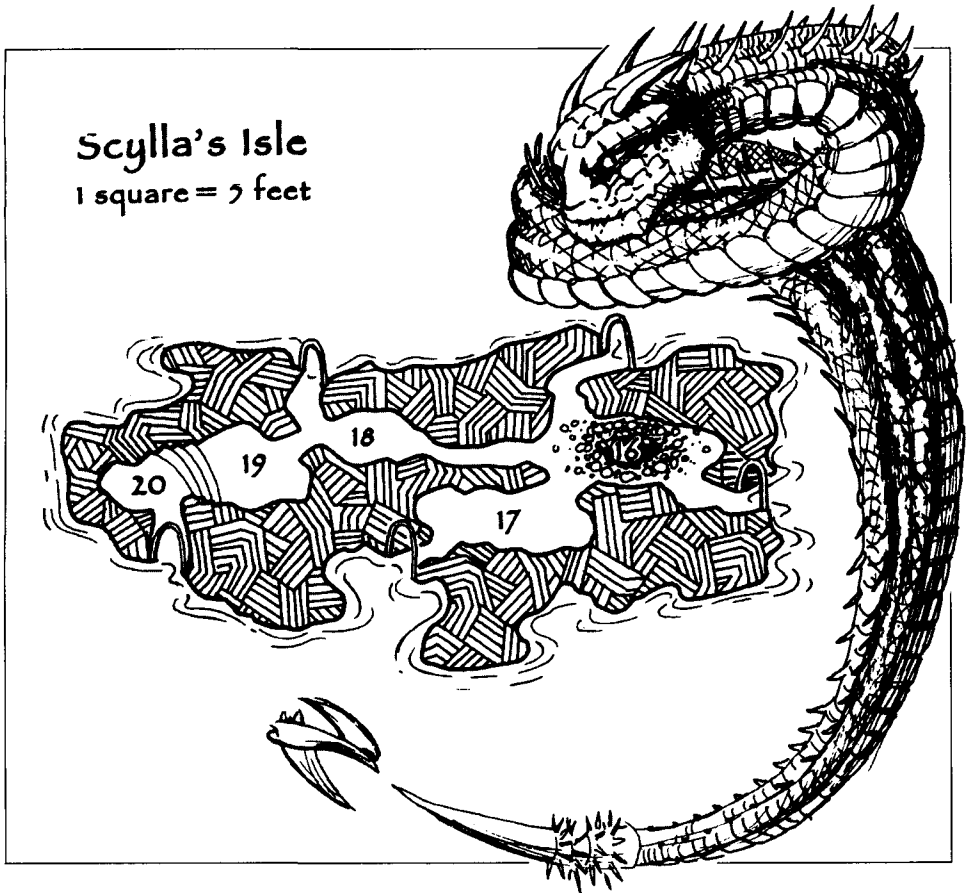
These damp, unoccupied caves both have ceilings 10′ high. A 5′ diameter hole in the roof of area **15B** leads to a larger chamber directly above. PCs may notice that the hole overhead is surrounded by a ring of large rocks (see area **16** for details). There's no easy way to climb up through the opening. The walls are slick and smooth (–50% penalty to Climb Walls checks).

When Pellerax needs to enter Scylla's lair, he makes the necessary ascent using his *levitate* spell. Scylla now demands that the other NPCs remain below; only Pellerax has permission to enter her inner chambers. Once in a while, the naga slithers out to the edge of the pit to *charm* the NPCs staring up from below or to disgorge one of her precious magical items so that they may find ways of using it to her advantage.

PCs must find some way to climb through the hole in the ceiling, either by standing on each other's shoulders or by using magic or some form of climbing gear. The rocks that encircle the pit (see below) are ideal for catching grappling hooks. However, characters attempting to climb up must first contend with the creatures in area **16.**

Scylla's Isle

16. Cave of the Urds. This chamber is slightly lower than areas **17–19** and periodically floods with water from the



lake. The naga has surrounded the central pit with a ring of mortared stones designed to keep the water from pouring into the lower tunnels. Several loose stones are scattered about the cave also.

This area is guarded by two spineless urds and four devious gremlins pressed into service by the naga. They guard the various entrances to Scylla's lair, especially the pit. If unwanted visitors are heard below, the urds and gremlins grab several loose rocks and drop them on the unsuspecting intruders. The monsters do not attack PCs accompanied by the wizard Pellerax, thinking they are members of Pellerax's band. However, only Pellerax may ascend or climb the pit without being attacked.

Prul and **Krik** (urds): INT low; AL NE; AC 8; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 4; hp 20, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA rock bomb (Dmg 2d4; unsuspecting targets are considered AC 10 for the attack roll); SZ S (3′ tall); ML 7; XP 120; *MM*/214 (kobold).

Knowing they cannot outfly the perytons, Prul and Krik are afraid to leave Scylla's lair and do not pursue PCs beyond its confines.

Gremlins (4): INT very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 4; hp 16, 16, 13, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite or rock bomb); SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 25%; SZ T; ML 6; XP 650; *MM*/174.

The gremlins shun melee combat, preferring to flee to area **19** and petition for the dark naga's protection.

17. Greyshard's Remains. Slumped against the wall of this otherwise bare 8′-high cave is the shrivelled corpse of Bristum Greyshard, Pellerax's less fortunate dwarven companion. Bristum was the first to explore Scylla's lair, and he was quickly and quietly slain by the naga. Scylla later feasted upon his blood, draining the body dry. Bristum's corpse has been stripped of valuables, leaving behind a suit of leather armor, a backpack filled with spoiled rations, a dagger, and a helmet. Once Bristum's flesh has fallen away, Scylla instructs her gremlins to scatter the dwarf's bones in area **18.**

18. Cave of Bones. The floor of this damp, 10′ high cave is strewn with the brittle, broken bones of Scylla's past victims. Rogue characters may cross the chamber quietly by making a successful Move Silently roll at a –25% penalty. Stepping on the bones creates a painfully audible crunching noise loud enough to alert Scylla in area **19.**

19. Scylla's Lair. Scylla has complete run of her small isle, but she prefers to reside in this 10′ high cave. The naga has adorned every nook and crevasse of the cave with gems acquired from past adventurers. There are 158 gems in total (75 × 10 gp, 42 × 50 gp, 23 × 100 gp, and 18 × 500 gp). The naga assumes the position indicated on the map, facing the eastern tunnel. If she hears intruders in area **20,** she rushes there immediately to protect her other hoarded treasures.

Dark nagas have an internal sack-like organ in which they store various items. These relatively small trinkets are protected from the naga's digestive system, and the creature may "cough up" items as needed. Scylla's internal sack currently holds the three *potions of green dragon control* (each labeled "Elixir Serpentus") and Aryzon's crystal claw, in addition to the following items: a *ring of feather falling,* two 1,000-gp gems, an inactive gem of insight (worth 5,000 gp), a gold snake-shaped bracelet (725 gp), a *Quaal's feather token* (bird) and two *potions* (*gaseous form* and *diminution*).

Scylla speaks common and expresses genuine annoyance at the party's intrusion. She has few offensive spells but is unafraid to use her natural weaponry coupled with her *vampiric touch* spell. If alerted to intruders, she casts a *blur* spell on herself. Scylla may use her tail stinger in the same round she bites or casts a spell. If reduced to 12 or fewer hit points, Scylla barters for her life by agreeing to relinquish Aryzon's potions (and the *crystal claw* if so ordered). She does not disgorge the other items hidden in her sack, even under threats. She spares the life of any PC who offers her a magical item in exchange. Once she confirms its magical nature with a cursory *detect magic* spell, she *charms* the hapless foe and allows him the privilege of serving as a slave.

Scylla (dark naga): INT exceptional; AL LE; AC 6; MV 13; HD 9; hp 63; THAC0 11; #AT 2 (bite/tail); Dmg 1d4/2d4; SA poisonous sting (save vs. poison or suffer an additional 1d2 hp damage and lapse into a drugged sleep for 2d4

rounds), spells; SD immune to acids, poisons and mind-reading spells; +2 to save vs. enchantment/charm spells; SZ L (12′ long); ML 15; XP 4,000; *MM*/267.

Spells (cast at 6th-level): *charm person* (×3), *detect magic, read magic; blur, scare; suggestion, vampiric touch.* Scylla rememorizes her spells daily without need of a spell-book.

20. Treasury. A shallow flight of roughly-hewn stairs descends from area **19** to a cramped, 8′ high cave at the northernmost end of Scylla's island. A flooded, 4′ deep cyst in the floor contains all the treasures that the naga couldn't contain in her internal sack: a suit of *elven scale mail +1,* a *short sword +1,* a *footman's mace +2,* a rotting quiver containing four *arrows +2, boots of varied tracks* (soaked) and *bracers of archery.*

PCs who enter this room via the western tunnel can be heard by the naga in area **19.** Only a thief making a Move Silently roll at –5% can enter the cave unnoticed. If an intruder is detected, Scylla appears one round later, attacking anyone caught violating her treasury.

Concluding the Adventure

Returning Aryzon's potions should net the party 2,000 XP as a story award. An additional award may be given for retrieving the dragon's crystal claw, whether or not the PCs decide to keep it. Killing Scylla instantly negates her active *charm* spells, freeing any NPCs and PCs enslaved by her potent magic. The surviving NPCs gladly accompany the characters back to Neriendor. They may even offer to join the PCs on some future quest, provided the arrangement is mutually beneficial. Pellerax and his surviving companions may even help the PCs confront Toxin, should the characters choose to pursue that course.

PCs who wish to claim Wyrmsmere Castle may do so. The keep's remote location in the heart of an untamed wilderness makes it an ideal base of operations for those eager to explore the woods and nearby mountains. There are no legitimate inheritors of the keep in the vicinity of Wyrmsmere or Neriendor to contest the PCs' claim. The perytons atop Scylla's isle must be slain or driven off, and there may be other hostile monsters lurking in the vicinity or possibly in the lake itself. Needlemen are known to congregate near the lake, and perhaps the rumors of a water dragon are true. (Amethyst dragons are known to hibernate in lakes such as this.)

If the PCs decide to confront Toxin at some later date, Aryzon allows them to take one or two of the magical potions, keeping one for himself in case the green dragon decides to visit Neriendor. Aryzon confirms that Toxin lives in a secluded section of forest twisted by the dark magics of an ancient, long-forgotten sorcerer (presumably Toxin's former master). The potions give the PCs an edge, but Toxin has several guardians to watch over his territory, including a grove of evil treants corrupted by the sorcerer's magic.

If the PCs return with treasure from the naga's lair, Aryzon agrees to purchase any items that become available. Magical items, armor and weapons are of particular value to Aryzon, and he pays reasonably well for them. (The dragon is an exceptional haggler, knocking down prices he finds unfair. Under such circumstances, he can be surprisingly stubborn and inflexible.)

If the PCs crave more adventure, Aryzon services them as best as he can, providing for their adventuring needs while simultaneously guiding them towards new adventures in the vicinity of the town. He hides his true nature for as long as possible, speaking of himself and his past only vaguely. In the last two hundred years, he's made several humanoid friends, but few have lived long enough to discover Aryzon's true identity. Ω

New Magical Items

Aryzon's *Crystal Claw*
XP Value: 8,000

This delicate charm looks like a small, 4″ long dragon's claw carved from a chunk of transparent, multi-faceted quartz crystal. Attached to the claw is a thin platinum necklace (worth 250 gp). The claw bestows upon its possessor the following abilities:

❖ *Detect chromatic dragons* within a one-mile radius. The claw turns color to correspond to the closest dragon within range (white, red, black, green or blue).

❖ Affords +4 to saves vs. dragon breath (including breath weapons from firedrakes, ice lizards, and other dragonettes).

❖ Affords 5% magic resistance. This protection is cumulative with other devices such as *rings of magic resistance* or *robes of the archmagi.*

❖ Endows the wearer with the following spell-like abilities, each usable once/day: *change self, dig, ESP, fear, infravision, levitate, magic missile, protection from evil, read magic, tongues, water breathing.* All spells are cast at 6th level.

Onyx's *Cloak of Stone Melding*
XP Value: 1,000

Onyx's dwarven *cloak of stone melding* functions as a *meld with stone* spell cast by a 6th-level priest. This thick grey garment was crafted specifically for dwarves and negates their usual 20% magical failure roll. The cloak's power may be employed by a dwarf, duergar or derro up to 3 times per day.

The *cloak of stone melding* does not function when worn by other races, although it continues to radiate magic.

By Rex May

"Oh, that's Mordred–I'm treating him for Arthur-itis."

ARCANE LORE

Scrolls of the Ice Mage

by Anne W. Davis

illustrated by Storn Cook

In the frozen northern wastes, wizards work with the materials they know best: ice, frost, and snow. Experienced ice mages scoff at the notion that fire spells are more effective than ice spells. They are quick to explain that fire spells are simply more common and a great deal less original than the ice magic of the North. In that, they are certainly correct. Even apprentice wizards have heard of *fireballs, fire traps, fire shields,* and *flaming spheres,* but few could mention more than one ice spell.

And so it was with a great deal of ceremony and pride that the small guild of ice mages donated the scrolls of ice spells to the library of the Wizards Guild of Wintercrest. The scrolls represent years of work on the part of their leader, Frostlash, whom they simply called the Ice Mage. He had asked that the spells be made available to the public upon his death. His hope that ice magic would gain more respect and popularity is slowly being realized, as more wizards share the spells.

First-level spells

Arctic Spray

(Evocation)
Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 5'-long arc
Saving Throw: Half

Similar to the *burning hands* spell, when the *arctic spray* spell is cast, the wizard must hold his hands with the thumbs touching and the fingers fanned out in front of him. An icy sheet of frost and small icicles burst forth from the caster's hands at a 120° arc for a distance of 5'. Any creature in the area of effect suffers 1d6 hp damage, plus an additional 2 hp for every experience level of the caster, up to a maximum of 1d6 +20 hp damage. A successful saving throw vs. spell reduces the damage by half.

Icy Missile

(Evocation)
Range: 100 yds.
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell produces up to five *icy missiles* that shoot from the wizard's hand and unerringly strike a single target. Potential targets must be seen and identified by the caster at the time the *missiles* are released. It is not possible to target a particular location on a creature (the eyes, for example.) Each *missile* inflicts 1d4 +1 hp cold damage to creatures. The *missiles* have no effect on inanimate objects.

A wizard of 1st or 2nd level produces only one *icy missile* upon casting this spell, but for each two experience levels beyond 1st he gains an additional *missile* up to a maximum of five *missiles.* All *icy missiles* must be directed at one target.

The material component for this spell is a smoky quartz crystal which is not consumed by the casting.

Shiver

(Evocation)
Range: 30 yds.
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round per level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negates

By means of this spell the wizard creates a small vortex of air that swirls around a single creature causing uncontrollable shivering for a number of rounds equal to the caster's experience level. The shivering makes spell-casting difficult (requiring a Constitution check at −2; failure indicates that the spell fails but is not lost from memory) and imposes a −2 penalty to all attack rolls. A successful saving throw vs. spell at +1 negates the effects of the spell.

The material component is a sprig of tundra grass that is consumed in the casting of the spell.

Second-level spells

Deep Freeze

(Alteration)
Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: Until dispelled
Casting Time: 10
Area of Effect: One nonliving object
Saving Throw: None

Deep freeze is usually cast on inanimate objects to preserve or protect them for a long period of time. When cast, the target object is instantly frozen and remains so until *deep freeze* is dispelled. It is impossible to physically manipulate objects that have been frozen with this spell. For example, a spell book could be frozen shut or a lock frozen closed. The most common use of the spell is to protect rations, meats, and other supplies from decay and rodents. *Deep freeze* does not affect living targets.

The caster can automatically dispel *deep freeze* with a simple verbal command (e.g., "thaw") whenever he chooses.

Freeze Tag

(Evocation)
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negates

By means of this spell, a wizard can inflict cold damage and temporary paralysis to a specific part of a creature. The wizard must successfully cast the spell and then touch the intended victim. The spell expires without effect if the caster fails to touch an opponent within one turn of having cast the spell.

The touched target suffers 1d8 hp damage and must make a saving throw vs. spell or have that particular part of his body paralyzed from cold. The paralysis lasts a number of rounds equal to

the caster's experience level or until a successful saving throw vs. paralysis is made. (One is allowed each round after the initial save has failed.)

The material component is a leaf of wintergreen, which is not consumed in the casting.

Frozen Ground

(Alteration)
Range: 0
Components: V, M, S
Duration: 2 rounds per level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 10' radius
Saving Throw: None

When *frozen ground* is cast, the area within 10' of the caster is instantly frozen solid enough to prevent tracks from being made in the area of effect. The caster must concentrate to maintain the spell, but he is able to walk or run while concentrating. Spell effects remain centered on the wizard no matter where he moves, and the ground remains frozen until it thaws naturally.

The material component of this spell is a handful of dirt, which is cast upon the ground.

Ice Floe

(Alteration)
Range: 10'
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 10' diameter
Saving Throw: None

This spell is generally used to enable the transportation of people or goods across rivers and lakes. When cast upon a body of water, a barge 3' thick in the center and up to 10' in diameter is created from the surrounding water.

The barge can safely hold six people evenly spaced and relatively still; however, the surface is somewhat slippery, and any rapid movement (such as combat) should be avoided. Those attempting combat or other hasty, violent movements must make a Dexterity check (at −4) each round or fall. The next round, they must make a second check (also at −4). If they fail, they slide off the barge into the water. (Attempting to stand slowly requires a simple Dexterity check.)

The barge floats with the current of the water unless propelled by some other means.

The duration varies according to the temperature in the water beneath the barge. In very cold water (less than 40°F) the barge will last an entire day. In warmer water (up to 60°F) the barge safely lasts for half a day. In very warm to hot water (more than 60°F) the barge will only last for about two hours.

The material component for this spell is a piece of driftwood that is cast into the water.

Ice Trap

(Evocation)
Range: 20'
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 turns per level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Up to 400 square feet
Saving Throw: None

When *ice trap* is cast over a pit, a very thin sheet of ice and snow covers and conceals it. A creature or object weighing more than 50 lbs. causes the ice to crack and break.

Ice trap can also be cast in a doorway or corridor (perhaps to conceal a corridor in an ice cave) but to little effect, since 50 lbs. of pressure breaks the ice.

Regardless of the duration of the spell, the ice and snow last only up to five rounds in temperatures above freezing.

The material component of this spell is a drop of water.

Snow Cone

(Evocation)
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Half

When this spell is cast, the wizard releases a cone of frost from his hand 30' long and 20' wide at the end. The frost inflicts 1d3 hp damage for each level of the caster to all creatures within the area of effect. If a successful saving throw vs. spell is made, damage is reduced to half.

The material component for snow cone is a fir cone, which is not consumed in the casting.

Third-level spells

Cold Shoulder

(Evocation)
Range: 30 yds.
Components: V, M, S
Duration: 1 round per level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 15' radius sphere
Saving Throw:

Cold shoulder creates a swirling vortex of frigid air with a radius of 15'. All creatures within the area of effect suffer 1d10 hp cold damage. A saving throw vs. spell reduces damage to half. Creatures in the vortex suffer an additional 1d4 hp damage each round they remain there. (Save for half damage each round.)

In addition to inflicting damage, the frosty air is so cold that it causes a cumulative penalty of −1 per round to initiative rolls and reduces movement rates by half while creatures remain in the area of effect.

The material component for this spell is a holly berry. It is not consumed by the spell.

Hail

(Evocation)
Range: 10' per level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 20' radius
Saving Throw: Half

By means of this spell, the wizard creates large hail stones that fall within an area of a 20' radius. The caster must indicate the point that will be the "epicenter" of the small hailstorm, as long as it is within his casting range. All creatures caught in the area of effect are pelted by the hail for one round and suffer 3d8 hp damage. If he is within the area of effect, the caster also must save or suffer damage. The damage is reduced by half if a successful saving throw vs. spell is made.

The material component is a handful of small pebbles that are hurled during the casting.

Ice Bolt

(Evocation)
Range: 40 yds. + 10 yds. per level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 10' × 40' bolt
Saving Throw: Half

Ice bolt is similar to the well known *lightning bolt* spell. When cast, the wizard releases a powerful "bolt" of cold energy that inflicts 1d4+1 hp damage for each experience level of the spellcaster (maximum damage is 10d4 +10).

Ice bolts are 10' wide, 5' high, and travel a maximum distance of 40'. Unlike *lightning bolts, ice bolts* do not reflect or rebound off solid surfaces. If an *ice bolt* reaches an unyielding barrier before it has traveled its full 40' distance, it dissolves harmlessly upon impact. Creatures within the area of effect are given a saving throw vs. spell to reduce damage by half.

Though the *ice bolt* is uncomfortably cold, the damage is caused by magical energy and is subject to magic resistance. Creatures immune to cold still suffer damage from an *ice bolt.*

The material components are a bit of wool and a bolt-shaped crystal; both are consumed in the casting.

Snowblind

(Evocation)
Range: 30′
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2d4 rounds
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Special

When *snowblind* is cast, a miniature blizzard of swirling snow centers around a single target causing near-total blindness and all penalties associated therewith. The blindness lasts 2d4 rounds, unless a successful saving throw vs. spell is made, reducing the duration by half.

The material component is a snow owl feather, which is not consumed in the casting.

Snowman

(Evocation)
Range: 10′ per level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2d4 rounds
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negates

When this spell is cast, a large amount of snow and ice crystals appear above a target creature's head and fall directly upon him. The caster must indicate a target within his casting range. If the target moves out of range, the spell takes effect over empty space. Though the snow inflicts no damage, its magical cold paralyzes the target if a successful saving throw vs. paralysis is failed. The paralysis lasts 2d4 rounds or until the creature is dragged out from under the snow. If the saving throw succeeds, the target suffers a −4 penalty to initiative, Dexterity checks, and attack rolls for two rounds.

The snow and ice created by this spell dissolve into the air and cannot be consumed or used as water.

The material component is a handful of down that is thrown at the target during casting.

Fourth-level spells

Hypothermia

(Evocation)
Range: 50 yds.
Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 30′ radius
Saving Throw: Half

When *hypothermia* is cast, the wizard infuses extreme cold into the bodies of all living creatures within a 30′ radius. The extreme cold inflicts an immediate 4d6 hp damage, unless a successful save vs. spell is made, reducing the damage by half. Those creatures failing their saving throw must make a successful System Shock check or lose consciousness for a number of rounds equal to the caster's experience level. Upon regaining consciousness, creatures must take at least five rounds to warm up before they can function normally.

The material component is a small crystal ball worth at least 100 gp. The crystal ball is broken during casting.

Northwind

(Alteration)
Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round per 2 levels
Casting time: 3
Area of Effect: 10 yds. + 10 yds. per level
Saving Throw: Special

Northwind creates a frigid gust of arctic air that blows forth from the caster in the direction he is pointing. The wind continues to blow for a full round for every two experience levels of the caster. All creatures caught in the wind suffer 1 hp damage for each round they are exposed to it. A successful saving throw vs. spell each round negates the damage but not the physical effects of the *northwind.* Apart from the cold damage, the area of effect, and the duration, the physical effects of *northwind* are otherwise equal to the 3rd-level spell *gust of wind.*

Fifth-level spell

Blizzard

(Alteration)
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3d6 hours
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 3d4 square miles
Saving Throw: None

This spell is similar to the 6th-level *control weather* spell in that it allows the caster to alter the weather in a large area for several hours. The difference is that a *blizzard* is the only condition that can be created with this spell. The *blizzard* con-

sists of very strong winds, arctic cold, deep clouds, and heavy snowfall. Travel in the affected area becomes very difficult, and visibility is reduced to 3'. Exposed creatures suffer from cold damage, frostbite, hypothermia, and other cold-related maladies unless shelter or protective clothing is found. The *blizzard* runs its course in 3d6 hours unless it is countered earlier by stronger magic *(control weather* or *wish,* for example). Once the spell has expired, the normal weather conditions return within one turn, but the accumulated snow and ice remain until they thaw naturally.

The material component is a scale or tooth from a white dragon, which is not consumed in the casting.

Sixth-level spells

Avalanche

(Evocation)
Range: 50 yds.
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2d4 rounds
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 20' radius
Saving Throw: Negates

Avalanche is a more impressive and powerful version of the *snowman* spell. Like the *hail* spell, the caster must indicate the point that will be the "epicenter" of the snowstorm, as long as it is within his casting range. When this spell is cast, all creatures within the area of effect are covered in snow and ice crystals that fall on them from above.

The snow causes no physical damage, but it is cold enough to paralyze the targets if a successful saving throw vs. paralysis is not made. The paralysis lasts 2d4 rounds or until the creatures are dragged out from under the area of effect. Even if the saving throw is successful, the creatures in the *avalanche* suffer a −4 penalty to initiative rolls for two rounds, and movement within the area of effect is reduced by half. The caster, if in the area of effect, is not immune to the spell.

The snow and ice created by this spell dissolve into the air and cannot be consumed or used as water.

The material component is a handful of down or fleece, which is thrown during casting.

Icicles

(Evocation)
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 turns per level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Two icicles per level
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates one 3' long *icicle* for every two levels of the caster (with a maximum of 10 *icicles*). The *icicles* can be hurled toward an opponent in combat. To attack, the *icicles* must be thrown like small spears, and a successful hit must be made. The casting wizard is not subject to non-proficiency penalties when throwing the *icicles.* Anyone else attempting to throw them, however, suffers any applicable non-proficiency penalties. The *icicles* act as *spears +3* and cause 1d8 +3 hp damage. They shatter upon impact regardless of whether a successful hit is made. The *icicles* last for three rounds for every experience level of the caster regardless of the weather conditions.

The material component is a pinch of diamond powder worth approximately 10 gp. Since the diamond powder is scattered at the time of casting, it must be replaced each time the spell is cast.

Seventh-level spell

Dancing Shards

(Evocation)
Range: 10 yds. + 5 yds. per level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round per level
Casting time: 7
Area of Effect: Five creatures
Saving Throw: None

Dancing shards creates up to five magical *ice shards* that attack specific targets as directed by the caster. When casting the spell, the wizard must be able to see and specify his intended targets (up to five different individuals). It is not possible to target a single creature with more than one *shard.* When the spell is completed, a *dancing shard* of ice appears above each of the specified targets and begins attacking. The attacking *shards* last a number of rounds equal to the caster's experience level.

They attack once per round with a THAC0 of 16 and inflict 1d6 hp damage. The target of the attack can attempt to parry the *shards,* but attempts to shatter or otherwise destroy them are futile. As long as the targeted creatures remain within range of the spell, the *shards* follow and attack until the spell expires. If a target moves out of the caster's range, the shard stays motionless at the extreme range, waiting for its designated target to return Such a shard cannot be redirected to another target.

The wizard must maintain concentration for the *shards* to continue their attack each round. Movement is possible while concentrating, but casting other spells or participating in combat are not.

The material component for this spell is a shard of glass that is broken in the casting. (A large shard of glass can provide the material components for multiple castings of the *dancing shards* spell.)

Eighth-Level spell

Winter Flames

(Evocation)
Range: 20'
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 8
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

Winter flames produces white and blue-hued flames that look and act similar to normal fire; however, *winter flames* radiate intense cold instead of heat and they burn only metals. Metal is as vulnerable to *winter flames* as paper is to normal flames. Upon casting, the wizard points his finger at a particular metal object, and the flames shoot toward it. The item has saving throw of 17 (modified by bonuses in the case of magical items) to resist the flames. If successful, the item fails to ignite. If the saving throw is unsuccessful, the item quickly ignites with milky winter flames and is consumed in one round leaving nothing but ashes behind. Magically enhanced metals receive an extra round for each plus they have before being consumed. If *winter flames* come in contact with other metals, they spread and continue to cause damage just like a normal fire.

Though nothing but metal can be ignited by *winter flames,* the intensity of the cold can still cause damage to exposed flesh. Exposure to *winter flames* should be treated just as exposure to normal fire, except that the damage incurred is due to cold rather than heat. (Each round of exposure causes 1d8 hp damage to the flesh that is in contact with the *winter flames.*)

Winter flames can be extinguished in the same manner as normal flames, but care should be taken to avoid contact with exposed flesh or other metals.

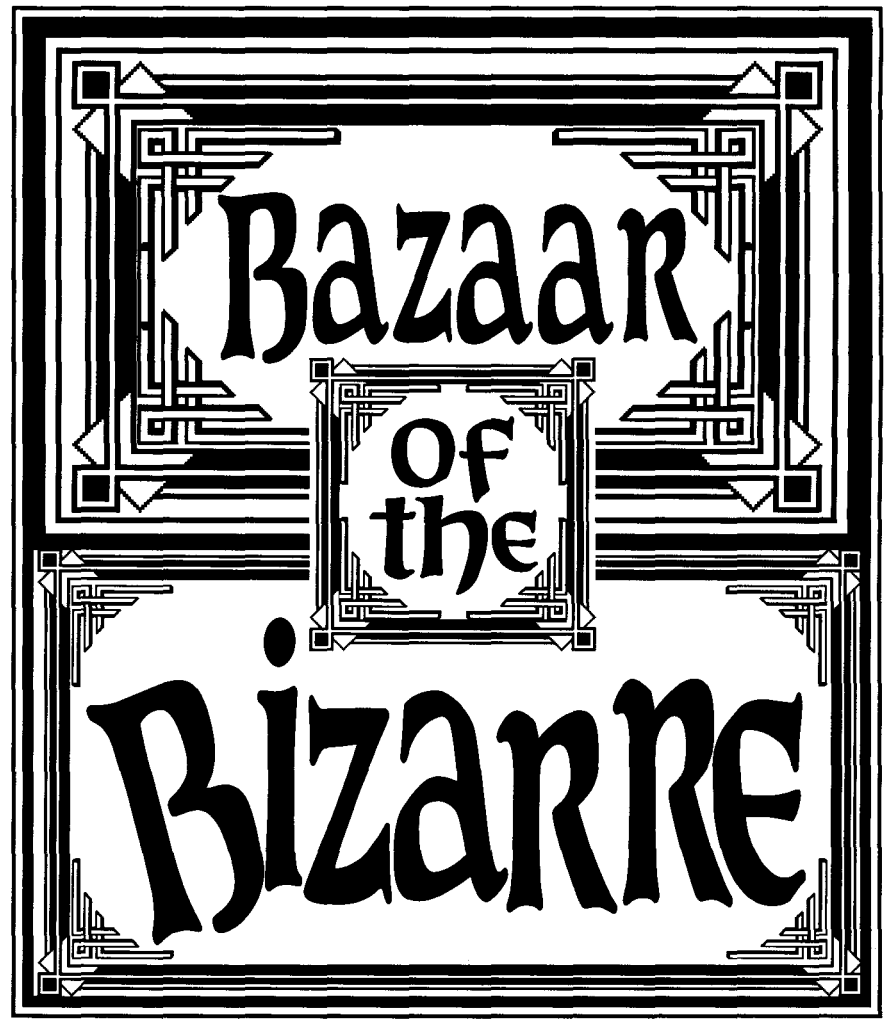
The material component is a pinch of ash.

While our information about the apprentices of Frostlash is sketchy at best, we're fairly certain that Anne W. Davis lives someplace very, very cold.

Strange new armor for your fantasy world

by Michael Lambert

illustrated by R.K. Post



"You're not going to wear that, are you?" Three-hundred-year old elves aren't surprised by much, but Rheasilva managed to convey a convincing air of skepticism.

"Why not? It as good as my chain mail and probably more effective in Brinwood than that cloak of yours." Ilmarren rangers weren't frightened by much, and Jerrodd was no exception.

"Why not?," she said. "Because it's alive, that's why not. Look ... it just moved!"

"It did not. You were kicking it." Jerrodd straightened out the brownish-green lump that lay on the ground. "And what if it is alive? It's the best armor I've ever seen. All I have to do is feed it every now and then."

"What do you think it eats?"

"Probably hay. Maybe an elf now and then."

"Don't push it. Just try the thing on and let's be gone." Her typically dour expression was even more imposing. "Those giants are bound to return soon."

"Okay," said Jerrodd, stepping onto the lump. Immediately it began to spread, crawling slowing up his body, covering him from just above his ankles to his neck. The living armor flowed over his head, leaving openings for his eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

"That's done," Jerrodd said, "I only hope it doesn't spook my horse."

"How does it feel?" asked Rheasilva.

"Like a rug of bugs," Jerrodd said, climbing slowly into his saddle. "Doesn't seem to bother the horse. Of course, I've always said she was smarter than any elf."

"Funny. We'll see who's laughing the first time those bugs get angry after taking an arrow for you."

As long as humans have used weapons, some type of armor has existed to reduce their effectiveness. Early man wore furs and hides to blunt the damage from wooden clubs, and metal armor has been around since approximately 2500 BC. Every new development in weapons technology since that time has led to advances in armor design. Early armor worn by the Syrians, Greeks, and Assyrians relied heavily on the use of bronze, until armor-grade iron became available. The short, iron mail shirt (*lorica hamata*) worn by Roman soldiers evolved into a thigh length, steel mail shirt (hauberk) that became the standard armor of 11th century European knights. The development of the crossbow in the early 1300s produced bolts capable of penetrating mail shirts, so armor with deflective surfaces became necessary. This plate armor, with modifications, was the standard European armor until the late 1500s, when the development of gunpowder reduced forever the use of metal armor.

Of course, many types of non-European armor also underwent design modifications through the ages. The quilted armor of Inca warriors, the coconut fiber armor of some Pacific island nations, and the armor of Japanese samurai were all regional variants of armor. All these armor types were developed under different circumstances, but they all reflect two basic design criteria – the weapons the armor was designed to protect against, and the materials and technology available. It's not to hard to imagine that other worlds, worlds with magic, fantastic races, and powerful monsters, will have different sets of circumstances that lead to the development of different types of armor.

The countless worlds and countless races of the AD&D® game create possibilities for the development of armor far different than real-world types. There may be settings where metal is scarce and other resources must be used to provide protection. Raiders from other worlds or planes may have weapons that force a race to design a radical new kind of armor, or trade with a new culture may expand the base of ideas for a previously isolated community. Whatever the reason, it's logical to assume that geographical, technological, cultural, and racial biases on AD&D worlds will combine to produce armor never seen before.

The following unique armor types are only a small sampling of how armor design can vary among fantasy settings. The backgrounds can be altered to fit any ongoing campaign.

Rabak armor

The forest-dwelling Bakara of the Rabak Forest do not have ready access to metals of any sort; what they do have are rabak trees, which provide a soft wood that, when treated by a special resin becomes pliable yet very tough. From rabak wood, Bakaran armorsmiths have created armor designed specifically for hand-to-hand combat (see below), as the dense growth of Rabak Forest prevents the effective use of missile weapons.

Construction: Rabak armor is constructed in three layers. The first consists of numerous thin strips of rabak wood that give the armor flexibility. The second is the main protective layer, made from thicker pieces of wood. The third layer adds additional protection, but its most important property is its ability to be "bled." Cutting the surface of the third layer of armor with a dagger or knife causes a sticky sap to coat the armor – any non-magical cutting or slashing weapon that strikes the armor has a 40% chance of sticking fast. The sap does not adhere to flesh or wood, only to metal. This sap lasts for 20 rounds, and the armor can be bled six times before the outer layer must be replaced. The armor of legendary Bakaran Warliege Taku is displayed in his village, with the weapons of nearly two dozen enemies embedded in the surface.

A typical suit of armor can be constructed in as little as two weeks.

Details: Rabak armor has a base AC of chain mail (5) but is less bulky and almost noiseless. It has no reflective surfaces and provides excellent camouflage in the forest (75% chance to be undetected). Rabak armor is easily dyed, and Bakaran armorsmiths often color armor to match the changing of the seasons.

A special type of ceremonial armor, without the ability to be bled, is created for powerful Warlieges. It is hand-crafted and has the AC value of plate mail (3). Ceremonial armor has been known to last for hundreds of years and is often the most prized possession of any village.

Campaign uses: Rabak armor can be priceless to characters on a world where wilderness adventures are common. The Bakarans trade freely in their armor, but there is one problem: travel to Rabak Forest is long and perilous. PCs may be able to find work as caravan guards, or they may be asked to secure a safe trading route from the forest to the free cities in the south. Aiding the Bakarans in trading their armor may gain the PCs important allies and, at the very least, can give them the opportunity to explore a portion of their world. Bakarans go to any length to protect ceremonial armor, and the PCs could become involved in a quest to recover a suit stolen from an influential settlement.

Sindar web armor

Spider webs are, pound for pound, stronger than the best-tempered steel. The elves of the Sindarathain Mountains learned this centuries ago and have specially bred giant spiders to produce armor-grade thread. The thread is processed to create light, supple armor capable of turning the strongest blade.

Construction: At the heart of Sindar armor is the spider web. Thousands of thick strands from the specially bred Sindarathain spiders are woven to form a suit of armor that extends from the shoulders to mid-thigh. The completed armor is treated with a special chemical to ensure cohesion of the strands. No helmets are made from the webs, but loose pants, usually worn over cotton leggings, are added.

Details: For sheer effectiveness, there is no better non-magical armor than Sindar web armor. It is light and supple,

easy to wear for extended periods. The base AC is 2, and there have been rumors of unique spiders capable of creating strands used to make armor of AC 0 and better. Sindar armor is a light silver color and is often mistaken for metal.

Campaign uses: The production of web armor is the centerpiece of the insulated community of Sindarathain elves. The secret of its construction is closely guarded, and many adventures can be planned around its acquisition. The elves may hire the PCs to track down a thief, or the PCs themselves may be thieves, hired by a rival manufacturer. Of course, the acquisition of even one suit can be an adventure in itself. Due to its rarity and value, PCs who procure a suit may find themselves the unwelcome target of a local thieves' guild.

If PCs cannot find an original suit of the armor, they may settle for one sold at an annual auction. This is a lesser version of the Sindar's own armor. The base AC is the same, but the traded armor is effective for only one year before the web strands lose their cohesiveness. This way, the elves ensure a steady flow of trade, as the armor is so valuable that even a suit lasting one year sells at an exorbitant price.

Asheiran armor

Armor is not always only for protection; in some societies, it is as much a symbol of social status. The ocean-dwelling Asheira of Bensana Bay have developed a system of leadership based on the armor worn by its warrior class.

Construction: The Asheira have found that low levels of electricity underwater attract microscopic crustaceans, usually in sufficient quantities to form a hard, shell-like surface over whatever has been electrically charged. The warm waters of Bensana Bay, where the Asheira have their largest settlement, has a special crustacean perfectly suited to forming armor thick enough to protect against most weapon attacks. Asheiran armorsmiths have created a slick, gray garment made from the skin of giant eels that has a small, perpetual electric charge. The longer the Asheira spend in the water around Bensana Bay, the more crustaceans are attracted to the garment, eventually forming a suit of armor. The warriors with the thickest, most ornate armor are recognized as veterans and enjoy great status within the community.

Suits are occasionally made for allies of the Asheira, or for trade with other undersea races. These are created by stretching the base gray garments over wire frames and submerging them in Bensana Bay until a suitable shell forms.

Details: The unique construction of the Asheiran armor means that its AC value depends on how long the wearer has had the suit. The base AC starts at 7, and can go as low as 0. This may take decades, though, and most suits range from AC 3–5. The armor cannot be worn outside water for more than a week at a time, or it begins to disintegrate.

Campaign uses: The Asheirans are warlike but honorable. PCs may encounter them as mercenaries or adventurers, as allies or enemies. Wearing Asheiran armor is so strongly ingrained in the society that no Asheiran will wear any other type. However, since the armor can be created only in the warm waters of Bensana Bay, any disaster to strike the site could irreparably harm the fabric of Asheiran society. PCs may be involved in a raid to damage their armor-making capabilities if the Asheira are a threat to a nearby settlement, or they may aid them in protecting the waters from an undersea attack. Great allies have sometimes been presented with armor designed to their specifications as an indication of honorary membership in the community.

Sul armor

The Renthi were masters of nature. They studied animals and insects for centuries, careful not to disturb the balance of the world. Unfortunately, the Renthi paid little heed to ways of war and were destroyed by the barbaric Tuathal. The Tuathal did not assimilate cultures they conquered, and the only remnant of the Renthi civilization is a specialized armor that was hastily developed during the last years of the war, but not in time to turn the tide of battle.

Construction: Sul armor isn't constructed – it's bred. The Renthi took sul, tiny, soft-bodied insects that secrete a cohesive substance when in contact with one another, and selectively bred them to form groups large enough to cover human-size creatures. Once groups this size are formed, the metabolism of the individual insects slows to the point that the group rarely separates (see below). When in contact with living creatures, the sul mold themselves around the body, leaving openings for the ears, eyes nose and mouth, as well as the hands and feet. Although the sul breed rapidly, the groups do not always have the stability to withstand repeated attacks. It

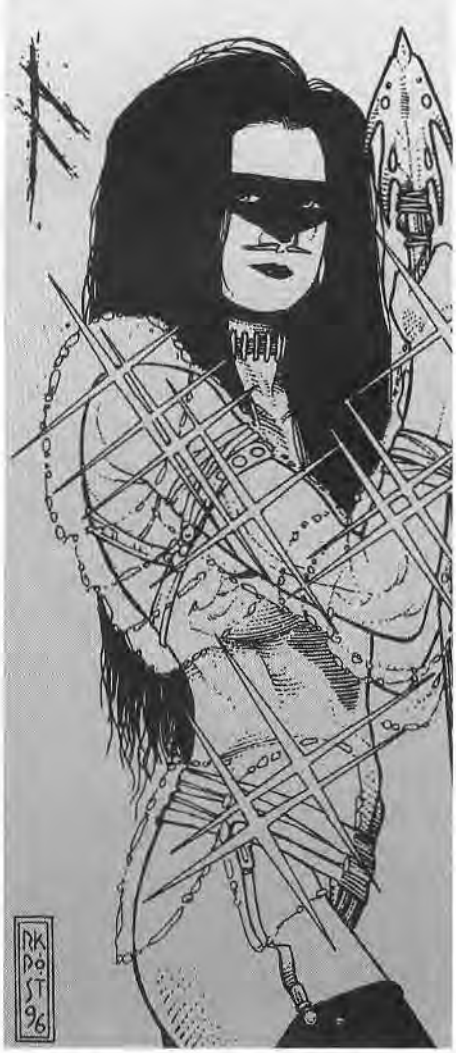
usually takes two to three months to develop a stable suit of armor.

Details: Sul armor has a base AC 4. The sul have remarkable regenerative powers and are completely healed the round after suffering damage. There is a 1% chance that a suit of armor can impart the regeneration on its wearer on any round in which the wearer is struck for damage.

No armor is faster or easier to put on or take off than sul armor. The sul mold themselves around anyone between 3'–8' tall who lies on them; it takes one round to be covered. The sul disengage from the wearer and lie flat on the ground when the armor covering the forehead is pulled back.

The sul also have chameleon-like abilities – their carapace changes color to blend in with their surroundings, making the wearer nearly invisible. If not moving, the wearer has an 85% chance of being undetected in any surroundings.

There is a 3% chance (non-cumulative) that the armor attacks and devours the wearer each time greater than 10 hp damage is delivered by one strike. The armor must be fed and watered once a week; it eats grain, which can be placed on it over night. If it is not fed, the



chance to devour the wearer increases by 5% (cumulative) each week.

Campaign uses: There isn't a thief alive who wouldn't crave a set of Sul armor. The best use for Sul armor, though, is to have it worn by a long-term enemy of the PCs. Its special properties lend themselves to dramatic escapes and offer a plausible explanation why an enemy might survive a supposedly fatal attack. Of course, the defeat of a powerful enemy is always a campaign highlight, and an enemy being devoured by his own armor after a powerful attack is spectacular imagery.

Armor of the Ventadari

In AD&D worlds, attacks aren't only physical – some are also magical. Very few armor designs can successfully counter magic. The armor of the Ventadari is a notable exception. Only four sets of the armor were ever created. Possibly the most powerful armors ever created, they were worn by the Ventadari, the all-female guard of Windlord Adrasta. Two were destroyed during the attempted assassination of Adrasta, and the location of the remaining two are unknown.

Construction: The construction of the Ventadari armor is a secret; no notes were ever taken, and the armor was never subject to inspection. It has been theorized that the armor was created with extra-planar aid.

A few facts about the armor's construction have been deduced through observation. It is not made of any known substance but appears to be constructed entirely of translucent layers of force. Its nearly invisible, but when light hits the armor at a certain angle, a faint, rainbow-colored shimmering appears. Putting on the armor is a simple as stepping into it, but no wearer can move in it unless he knows the command word.

Each suit took nearly 10 years to construct, at an incalculable cost.

Details: The armor of the Ventadari has a base AC of 0. The armor's main ability is its magic resistance. Up to a point, the wearer is 50% resistant to all spells and spell-like effects generated by rods, staffs or wands. The armor doesn't reflect or cause a spell to fail; instead, it absorbs the energy and gradually disperses it. The armor can disperse five spell levels of energy a round, starting at the end of the round in which spells are first absorbed. However, if the armor absorbs too much energy too quickly, it begin to lose its effectiveness. The following table shows what spells become effective at different levels of absorbed energy:

Spell Levels Absorbed	Spells Effective	Color of Armor
1–10	None	Clear
11–15	1st	Green
16–20	2nd	Blue
21–25	3rd	Red
26–30	4th	Black

The spells that are effective are cumulative. For example, if the armor absorbs 21 spell levels of energy in round 1, the wearer is not protected against first- and second-level spells the next round (16 spell levels total after 5 spell levels are dispersed). The armor changes color to show the state of protection, as indicated by the third column. Area of effect spells still affect everyone in the vicinity of the armor – only the wearer has 50% magic resistance.

The Ventadari pledged themselves to protect Adrasta to death and beyond. The armor uses this to its advantage in two ways. First, wearers can use a double-strength *haste* spell twice/day. Each time this ability is used the wearer ages two years. Secondly, wearer's can permanently sacrifice 1 hp to gain 20 temporary hit points for 5 rounds. In the assassination attempt where two suits were destroyed, one of the bodyguards single-handedly defeated 50 baatezu before dying of old age and the permanent loss of all her hit points.

Campaign uses: Obviously, the armor is powerful enough that PCs shouldn't have easy access to it. However, they may be asked to undertake a quest to recover the armor for an important NPC; an artifact of this magnitude would certainly warrant powerful guardians and would be a test of skill for even a veteran party.

It may be tempting to have a high-level PC actually undergo a quest of mythic proportions to recover the armor for his own use. This must be handled carefully within the context of the campaign. The PC may find himself the center of unwanted attention. Towns and villages may reach out to him as a hero, and there will certainly be an assortment of NPCs, both good and evil, who want the armor for themselves.

Michael Lambert teaches tae kwon do and works in the import department of a store when not playing the AD&D® game.

Armor details summary

Armor	Cost (gp)	Weight (lbs.)	Base AC	Thieving Skill Adjustments PP	FT	HS	CW	OL	MS	HN
Rabak Armor	700	30	5	–25%	–15%	–10%	–30%	–15%	–5%	–15
Sindar Armor	3,000	20	2	–30%	–5%	–10%	–20%	–5%	–5%	–5
Asheiran Armor	Avg. 100	Avg. 25	Varies	–40%	–15%	–25%	–35%	–15%	–30%	–20
Sul Armor	3,000	15	4	–20%	–5%	+20%	–15%	–5%	–5%	–5
Ventadari Armor	N/A	10	0	–10%	–5%	0%	–15%	–5%	0%	–20

The Dragon's Bestiary

Predators of the Underdark

by Keith Strohm

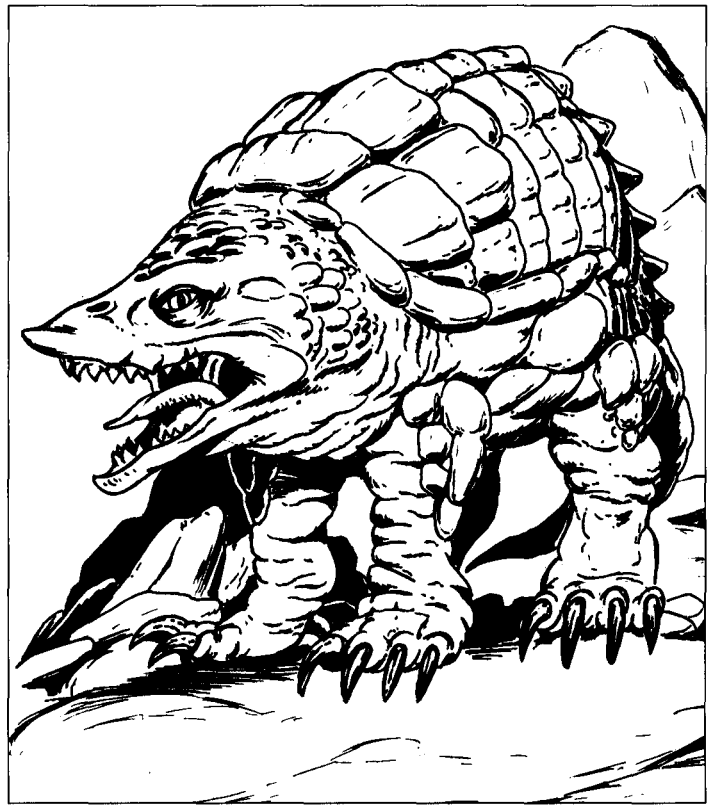
illustrated by James Holloway

As most players have learned, the Underdark is a deadly place. PCs entering the sunless world know they will eventually face bloodthirsty drow, alien illithid, and devious derro. The most dangerous opponents, however, are those with whom the PCs are not yet familiar. In the seemingly endless passages of the Underdark, who knows what horrors have yet to be discovered?

The following monsters are designed specifically to add spice to campaigns set in the Underdark or similar subterranean regions. Below the surface of the sunlit world, the game of life is played with unparalleled brutality. Down here in the dark, twisting caverns and damp grottos, the line between predator and prey often disappears. Be warned: The hunters have arrived!

Gohlbrorn

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean/Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Group
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
NO. APPEARING:	3–6 (1d4+2)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9, Burrow 18
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 + Special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d6/3d6 and special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Launch stones
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Natural coloration
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5′–7′ long), 5′ high
MORALE:	Elite 13–14
XP VALUE:	975



The gohlbrorn, a relative of the fearsome bulette, hunts throughout the cavern complexes of the underdark. The gohlbrorn shares its cousin's bullet shape and thickly armored body, though it is considerably smaller and more intelligent than a bulette.

The creature's hindquarters range from dark blue to deep brown; its head, which takes up a considerable portion of its body, is a dark gray. The thick scales and plates of the gohlbrorn reflect the color of the surrounding stone and rock. This coloration allows it to blend in with its surroundings; it is indistinguishable from natural stone 45% of the time.

The gohlbrorn possesses an inner eyelid that filters all light brighter than candlelight. This nictitating lid protects the creature from the blinding effects of *light* spells and is an invaluable aid when it hunts close to the surface world.

Gohlbrorn have their own complicated language that sounds like distant rumbling to the untrained ear. It is not known whether these predators can reproduce the speech of other creatures; it is likely, however, that they can learn and understand other languages besides their own.

Combat: Gohlbrorn are extremely cunning fighters. A school of these predators often uses their natural coloring to observe their prey before attacking; gohlbrorn do not attack obviously powerful prey unless they believe the odds to be in their favor. Whenever possible, they tunnel ahead of their intended victims and lie in ambush just below the surface of cavern walls, ceilings, and floors. When their prey reach the ambush site, the gohlbrorn spring out from their tunnels, forcing all opponents to suffer a –3 penalty on surprise rolls.

Gohlbrorn fight in a highly organized manner; they concentrate their attacks on spellcasters before engaging other enemies. Often, the gohlbrorn utilize "hit and run" tactics; they assault an opponent, then dive back into their tunnel, only to attack again from a different position. Their favorite melee attack consists of a powerful claw, which inflicts 2–12 hp damage, and a ferocious bite, which causes 3–18 hp damage.

In addition to these awesome attacks, gohlbrorn can spew large rocks from their gullets. The missiles strike with tremendous force, inflicting 1d8+1 hp damage. The creatures store these rocks as they burrow through the earth; each gohlbrorn has 2d4 (2–8) available stones.

A school of gohlbrorn rarely stand their ground in a losing battle; they quickly flee if overwhelmed. These intelligent predators have long memories, however, and it is not uncommon to see them flee a battle, only to return with greater numbers.

Habitat/Society: Gohlbrorn wander throughout the almost limitless expanse of the underdark, though they prefer to hunt around large populations of easy prey (such as grimlocks, quaggoth, and the like). They fear the illithid and find the svirfneblin, and their illusions, far too bothersome to hunt.

Although gohlbrorn have highly structured hunting groups, with the strongest acting as leader, they rarely set up permanent lairs. Mated pairs set up temporary lairs to shelter 1d6 eggs. The creatures defend their eggs to the death, although the parents abandon their hatchlings soon after the young emerge from their shells.

Ecology: Gohlbrorn are short-lived in comparison to other denizens of the Underdark; they can actively hunt for about 20 years before age slows them down. Unlike many predators, however, they do not abandon older members of the hunting school. In fact, the younger hunters in the school often catch prey for those who are too frail to engage in the hunt on their own.

Gohlbrorn eat just about any sort of prey they can catch. Drow, however, seem to be a much-sought-after food.

Lukhorn

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2–4)
TREASURE:	Incidental
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3/5 (Interior)
MOVEMENT:	9, Burrow 9
HIT DICE:	10
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Digestive acid/sonic screech
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Camouflage/see below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (15′ Diameter/20′ Long)
MORALE:	Average (8–0)
XP VALUE:	6,000

The Lukhorn is a burrowing worm-like predator that lurks in the mysterious caverns of the Underdark. Generally gray-skinned, the Lukhorn can alter its coloration and almost perfectly match the stone around it. Those native to the Underdark can see through the Lukhorn's camouflage with a successful Wisdom check; unfortunately, surface dwellers cannot pierce the creature's disguise unless they view it with illumination as bright as sunlight.

Lukhorns possess a highly malleable body structure; they are able to "mold" themselves to the shape of whatever cavern or tunnel they travel through. The creature's skin is coated with a sheath of viscous liquid that it secretes through tiny, pore-like openings. The liquid helps keep the lukhorn's skin supple, and masks the intensity of the creature's body heat from infravision.

The lukhorn averages about 20′ in length, though legends tell of gargantuan versions of this creature.

Combat: The lukhorn prefers to use its highly malleable body and excellent camouflage to mimic a cavern or tunnel opening. The worm moves to the mouth of a dark tunnel, shapes its body to the dimensions of the tunnel, then opens its huge mouth. The lukhorn promptly swallows any creature that walks into its mouth. Extremely hungry lukhorns do not wait for their prey to fall into their trap; rather, the monstrous worms attempt to swallow victims as they pass by their hiding place.

Once swallowed, a creature suffers 4d6 hp damage per round from the lukhorn's digestive juices. These juices are powerful enough to dissolve wood and cloth in two rounds. Metal, such as that in armor and weapons, dissolves after 4 rounds of exposure to the creature's digestive acid.

A swallowed victim may attempt to cut himself out of the lukhorn by inflicting 40 hp damage to a concentrated area inside the creature. Unfortunately, the lukhorn's malleable body makes it difficult to injure. Though only AC 5, the rubbery interior of the creature does not suffer damage from bludgeoning weapons; all other weapons subtract 2 hp damage from their total for each attack.

If the lukhorn is attacked while digesting prey, the worm emits a powerful sonic screech. Everyone within a 60′ radius of the screech must make a saving throw vs. petrification; those who fail the save writhe in agony on the ground for 1d6 rounds. The lukhorn's screech carries for miles in the twisting caverns of the Underdark.

Habitat/Society: Little is known about lukhorn life cycles except that they are solitary creatures, ever wandering in search of food. Some scholars suggest that the giant worms mate in secret breeding caverns deep within the Underdark – though this has never been proven. Thankfully, it seems that these creatures do not reproduce often.

Ecology: Lukhorns are some of the most powerful predators in the Underdark; they have even been known to consume whole drow patrols. They are highly carnivorous and driven almost wholly by hunger.

The viscous liquid secreted by the lukhorn is often in high demand by alchemists and wizards (1,000 gp per vial). When used in the creation of *invisibility* and *polymorph potions,* it extends their durations by 25%. Unfortunately, the liquid dries almost immediately upon the death of the lukhorn; it is extremely difficult to secure more than a vial or two from a recently killed specimen.

Varkha

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean/Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	J, M, D
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil

NO. APPEARING:	5–50 (5d10)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	12, Swim 9
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 (1 with weapon)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6/1d6 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'–5')
MORALE:	Average (8–10)
XP VALUE:	15

Varkha are a race of brutal, subterranean lizard men that hunt in the caverns of the Underdark. These creatures are smaller than their surface dwelling cousins (standing only four to five feet tall) but possess many similar characteristics. Varkha scale color ranges from dark gray to deep green, and their tails average one to two feet in length.

Unlike lizard men, the varkha have large, photo-sensitive eyes and fight at –1 in the equivalent of sunlight. Their eyes are set toward the sides of their head, much like those of a frog. In addition, the creatures possess a connective layer of webbing beneath their armpits. When fully extended, this webbing facilitates greater movement in watery environments such as underground lakes and rivers.

Combat: Though not particularly powerful, the varkha have adapted their hunting strategies to make maximum use of their numbers. Hunting varkha often attempt to herd prey into a watery cavern. Once there, the creatures use their superior numbers and swimming skills to kill their victims.

In combat, varkha use their vicious claws to inflict 1d6 hp damage. In addition, some Varkha fashion crude weapons from bone and sharpened rock. These are usually primitive spears, or other missile weapons.

For every 15 varkha encountered, there is also one *sllith* (hunt leader) with 2 HD, as well as a 35% chance for a shaman with 2 HD and the abilities of a 2nd-level priest. If 40 varkha are encountered, there will be two *sllith*, a 2-HD shaman, and a 3-HD *gsssrat* (master of the hunt). Hunting parties of 50 varkha are always led by a 4-HD *gaakth* (sub-chief) and a 3-HD shaman.

Habitat/Society: The varkha have a close-knit tribal society. Tribal lairs are found deep in the moist caverns of the Underdark, and usually consist of 75–150 varkha. Responsibility for the varkha tribe falls squarely on the *tssri* (chief), a 5-HD creature with high intelligence.

One quarter of all varkha encountered in lairs are female. These females usually reside in breeding caverns adjacent to the hunters' caverns. Though often brooding over their eggs, varkha females share the responsibilities of the hunt with their male counterparts; eggless females often accompany a hunting party. A brooding varkha defends the breeding caverns from invaders and other predators with incredible ferocity, adding +1 to their attack and damage rolls until they neutralize the danger.

Varkha lairs of 70 or more also keep 1–3 subterranean lizards as guardians. These large creatures are controlled by the chief and sub-chiefs of the lair. They often position the giant lizards outside the breeding caverns (if space permits) in times of war.

Ecology: Varkha have many natural enemies – they are prey as well as predator in the depths of the Underdark. Varkha also have a deep hatred for gibberlings; the two races attack each other to the exclusion of all else when the opportunity presents itself. Drow despise the crude varkha but often use them as slaves for their large cities.

Chromatic Mold

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean/Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Patch
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 patch
ARMOR CLASS:	9
MOVEMENT:	0 (Special)
HIT DICE:	N/A
THAC0:	N/A
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	N/A
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spore infestation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S/L
MORALE:	N/A
XP VALUE:	35

Chromatic mold is a spore-producing fungi that grows in warm, damp caverns such as exist in the twisted passages of the Underdark. The fungal growth has a thick, furry texture and appears dark brown in color to normal sight.

Infravision reveals a totally different picture of the fungus. Chromatic molds emit a complex pattern of varying heat signatures. These patterns register as swirling shades and colors to the eyes of infravision users.

Due to their unusual method of reproduction, chromatic molds are rarely found in large colonies. Individual patches of mold can grow up to 12' in length.

Combat: Although not a predator in the common sense of the word, Chromatic molds are highly carnivorous creatures that have feasted on the flesh of thousands of Underdark inhabitants.

The mold's swirling heat signatures easily fascinate those who view it with infravision. Any user of infravision who views the chromatic mold must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or be helplessly drawn towards the fungus.

When any creature approaches within three feet of the chromatic mold, it sends out a cloud of spores in a 10' radius. Anyone caught within the cloud must make a saving throw vs. poison. Failure indicates that the victim breathes in the mold spores and begins to wander aimlessly as if under the effects of a *feeblemind* spell. The spores incubate within the victim's body, slowly consuming the creature from within. After 10 hours, a new patch of chromatic mold bursts forth from the unfortunate's body, completely consuming him in another 12 hours.

A *hold plant* spell halts the spores' incubation for the duration of the enchantment; after that, however, the infestation progresses as normal. *Cure disease* permanently kills the spore infestation if cast before the first 10 hours of affliction. After this period, however, the *cure disease* spell destroys both the mold and the victim.

Fire is a useful weapon against this creature; it consumes the mold at the rate of 1d4 rounds per 10' patch.

Ecology: Chromatic molds usually have a profound effect on their surrounding ecosystem. It is not uncommon for intelligent creatures, such as drow, duergar, and deep gnomes, to routinely torch an entire cavern complex if even one cave exhibits signs of infestation.

Elghonn

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Underdark
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Unknown
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17–18)
TREASURE:	Incidental
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	16
HIT DICE:	15 (125 hit points)
THAC0:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Use poisons, rogue skills, see below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Regeneration, +2 or greater weapons to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	65%
SIZE:	M (7′ tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	15,000

The elghonn is one of the most powerful predators of the Underdark. Not much is known about this legendary creature. Its name stems from the drow word *elghinn,* meaning death, for this is surely what the hunter leaves in its wake. Some scholars dismiss the elghonn as nothing more than a mythological construct. Those actually living in the Underdark, however, know that this creature is death personified; even the drow matriarchs of Menzoberranzan fearfully whisper its name.

Those who claim to have caught a glimpse of the creature can describe only a mysterious being wrapped in dark, voluminous robes. These robes hide almost all of its horrifying features, though one overly boastful fool claimed to have looked the creature in its cold red eyes. The elghonn carries a terrifying arsenal of weapons designed to inflict great pain and, ultimately, to kill.

Combat: The elghonn is a relentless hunter, using all of its heightened senses to track prey. These almost supernatural senses allow the predator to "see" invisible and astral objects and persons. In addition, the elghonn suffers no penalty when fighting in normal or magical darkness.

The elghonn is a creature of the shadows; as such, it has a 75% chance to Move Silently and an 85% chance to Hide in Shadows. It uses these almost constantly when hunting. Often, the elghinn trails its prey for several days, revealing itself briefly to its victim before melting back into the shadows.

As the elghonn enjoys sensing fear in its prey, it often employs a debilitating poison brewed from several Underdark fungi. This poison gradually weakens the prey, reducing Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores by 2 points every hour. The victim must make a saving throw vs. poison to resist the effects of the elghonn's debilitating concoction when it is first injected (usually by means of a crossbow bolt or other missile weapon). Poisoned prey eventually fall to the ground, paralyzed but fully conscious, when any one of their three ability scores falls to 0.

The Elghonn is a deadly fighter, and it employs a wide variety of weapons (left up to the DM) in combat; these weapons are usually magical in nature. One of the elghonn's favorites is *blackadder, a long sword +2, lifestealer.* The Elghonn can strike up to four times in a single combat round and can wield a different weapon in each hand.

In addition to its offensive capability, the creature also possesses a number of special defenses. The Elghonn may only be struck by weapons of +2 or greater enchantment; normal swords and lesser magical weapons have absolutely no effect on the creature. Furthermore, the elghonn regenerates 1d6 hp every round.

Habitat/Society: The elghonn constantly wanders the caverns of the Underdark in search of prey. It is not known whether the creature has a central lair from which it sets out. If such a lair exists, it is surely a place of unspeakable evil.

Ecology: All living creatures of the Underdark exist as prey for the elghonn. So far, it has never exhibited any preference as to who or what it stalks. Curiously enough, the elghonn never consumes its prey after the kill; however, dead victims of the predator are always found with expressions of horror on their faces.

Some scholars suggest that the elghonn may be an agent of some dark deity or perhaps even an avatar of some forgotten god. Unfortunately, no one has been able to substantiate this theory; the last several sages who entered the Underdark to unearth some information on this creature have never returned.

Rogue's Gallery

by Elaine Cunningham

Hasheth, Lord Venazir

5th-level thief

Strength:	9
Intelligence:	18
Wisdom:	10
Dexterity:	17
Constitution:	10
Charisma:	9
AC:	10
THAC0:	16
Hit Points:	30
Alignment:	CN
Special Attacks:	3/1 to thrown daggers
Special Defenses:	acquired resistance to common poisons
Magic Resistance:	Nil
Size:	5'9"

Weapon proficiencies: Throwing knives, short sword, scimitar, garrote.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Etiquette; gaming; heraldry; languages – common, Old Tethyrian (formal court language and what amounts to a "common Tethyrian" language), Zazesspurian (regional dialect of Tethyrian,) Amnish, High Calidrian (the dialect most frequently spoken in Calimshan); local history; reading and writing; riding (land-based); Tethyrian law.

Appearance: Hasheth is a human male not quite sixteen years of age. He is of average height and build, but his proud bearing makes him seem older and more imposing. His dark coloring speaks of his southern heritage: he has short black hair, black eyes, a dark olive complexion, and a strongly aquiline nose.

Background: Hasheth is one of many sons born to Pasha Balik, who ruled the city of Zazesspur in Tethyr. A minor son born of the harem, Hasheth realized early in life that he would have to make his own way to fortune and power. He entered the School of Stealth to train as an assassin; although he did not remain there long, he picked up several valuable skills and he came into contact with Harper agents Arilyn Moonblade and Danilo Thann. He became a Harper informer, a role he is likely to continue.

Since leaving the School of Stealth, Hasheth has sampled several careers, including that of a minor lord. (His father settled lands and a manor upon his restless younger son, hoping to keep him busy – elsewhere!) Recently he became apprentice to Lord Inseln Hhune, a former councilor of Zazesspur and head of the city's shipping guild, as well as a powerful agent of the secret society known as the Knights of the Shield (which often acts in opposition to the Harpers, the northlands, and Waterdeep in particular.) In Hhune's service, Hasheth has finally found a niche for his talents and ambitions.

Equipment: Hasheth's dual fortunes – one inherited from his "royal" family and one that he is rapidly stockpiling through his own efforts – enable him to purchase whatever he wants without the need to reckon the cost. He is especially fond of horses and has a stable of fine mounts.

Magical items: *Sand-hue sash* (a belt that adds +1 to the wearer's Dexterity), *ring of jumping*

Role-playing notes: Proud and arrogant in the extreme, Hasheth is nearly as good as he thinks he is. Despite his youth, he is adept at devising and carrying out complex plots and intrigues. He delights in gathering information and using it to solve puzzles. He provides useful information and services to the Harpers, but those who would utilize Hasheth's talents should refrain from telling him too much about their own plans; there is little he would not do to further his goal of personal wealth and power. He does have a sense of honor, but it is more bound up in his sense of self than in any moral code of behavior. Hasheth seems destined to rise in power: By all means, cultivate his acquaintance – but watch your back!

Ferret

9th-level fighter, 9th-level thief

STRENGTH:	10
INTELLIGENCE:	13
WISDOM:	10
DEXTERITY:	19
CONSTITUTION:	15
CHARISMA:	16
AC:	8
THAC0:	12
HIT POINTS:	42
ALIGNMENT:	CG
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	3/2
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	immune to woodland creature charm spells
SIZE:	5'4"

Weapon proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, elven bow

Nonweapon proficiencies: Ancient history; animal lore; swimming; dancing; disguise; healing; herbalism; hunting; languages – common, elven common, high elven, Elmanesse (a dialect of elvish spoken by the wild elves in the Forest of Tethir), centaur, treant, dryad, pixie; local history; tracking.

Appearance: Ferret is a wild elf from the Forest of Tethir. She is of very slender build and has almond-shaped black eyes, coppery skin, and long, thick brown hair. She often appears as an exotic human woman of the East, an elaborate disguise that involves heavy makeup to pale her skin, a turban to hide her elven ears, gloves to disguise her slender hands, and tight, revealing clothing designed to draw the eye away from the signs of her heritage and affix them firmly upon her lithe figure. While among humans, she speaks in a sultry whisper – not only to enhance her disguise but also to hide her distinctively elven voice. She is young, about 135 years old, and in her human guise appears to be in her early 20's. She wears a tattoo on her shoulder, a stylized image of graceful hunting ferret – her namesake and her totem animal.

Background: Ferret is younger sister to Rhothomir, the Speaker of the Elmanesse tribe. She is lore-keeper of the tribe, a skilled storyteller who knows the history and legends of the wild elves. She is fiercely loyal to her people and her tribe, willing to do anything that might aid them. Tethyr's elves have a history of persecution at the hands of the ruling humans, and recent attacks have spurred her into unorthodox action. Disguising herself as a human woman, she has won a place for herself among the professional assassins of Zazesspur. In this capacity, she hunts down and eliminates those whom she deems enemies of the elves.

Equipment: Light leather armor, long sword, throwing knives, large wardrobe of elaborate gowns, scarfs, turbans, jewelry, and cosmetics.

Magical items: *boots of elvenkind.*

Role-playing notes: In her guise of exotic human courtesan, Ferret is likely to appear among the wealthy and powerful of Zazesspur. She is willing, indeed eager, to act as either courtesan or assassin if she thinks that doing so will benefit her tribe. Her acquaintance with Harper agent Arilyn Moonblade would make her a possible choice to carry information into the Forest of Tethir – but don't expect her to act as a forest guide or to do anything that might endanger the wild elves.

Allain Kevanarial (Foxfire)

12th-level ranger

STRENGTH:	15
INTELLIGENCE:	16
WISDOM:	17
DEXTERITY:	18
CONSTITUTION:	14
CHARISMA:	19
AC:	7
THAC0:	11
HIT POINTS:	45
ALIGNMENT:	NG
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	+4 with elven longbow
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	immune to woodland creature charm spells, +3 to magical defense
SIZE:	5'9"

Weapon proficiencies: Specialized in longbow, long sword, dagger, knife.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Animal lore; bowyer; dancing; fletcher; fishing; herbalism; healing; hunting; languages – common, elvish common, high elvish, Elmanesse, centaur, treant, pixie; running; set snares; survival (woodlands of Tethir); swimming; tracking.

Appearance: Foxfire is named for his mane of auburn hair, which he usually wears braided and woven with reeds and feathers to help the bright color blend into the forest landscape. He is tall for a forest elf and stronger than most of his kind. He is a strikingly handsome elf, with large dark eyes, chiseled features, and a ready smile. As do many of his people, he decorates his coppery skin by painting it with swirling designs in shades of green and brown.

Background: Foxfire is the warleader of the Elmanesse tribe. He has an unusual gift for leadership, and he inspires those around him with confidence and pride. Deadly calm in battle, he also has a quick wit and a silver tongue. He is more outgoing and open-minded than most members of his tribe. He is young, not yet 200 years old, but he is old enough to have experienced much of Tethyr's stormy history. As a child, he lived near the western border of the forest in a settlement of elves who often traded with the humans of Tethyr. When his immediate family was slain at the command of the former royal family of Tethyr, the surviving members of his clan joined several other Elmanesse clans in their deep-forest refuge. He is more knowledgeable of humans than many of his peers, yet despite his grim experiences with humankind, he is willing to consider any person, elven or human, on his or her merits.

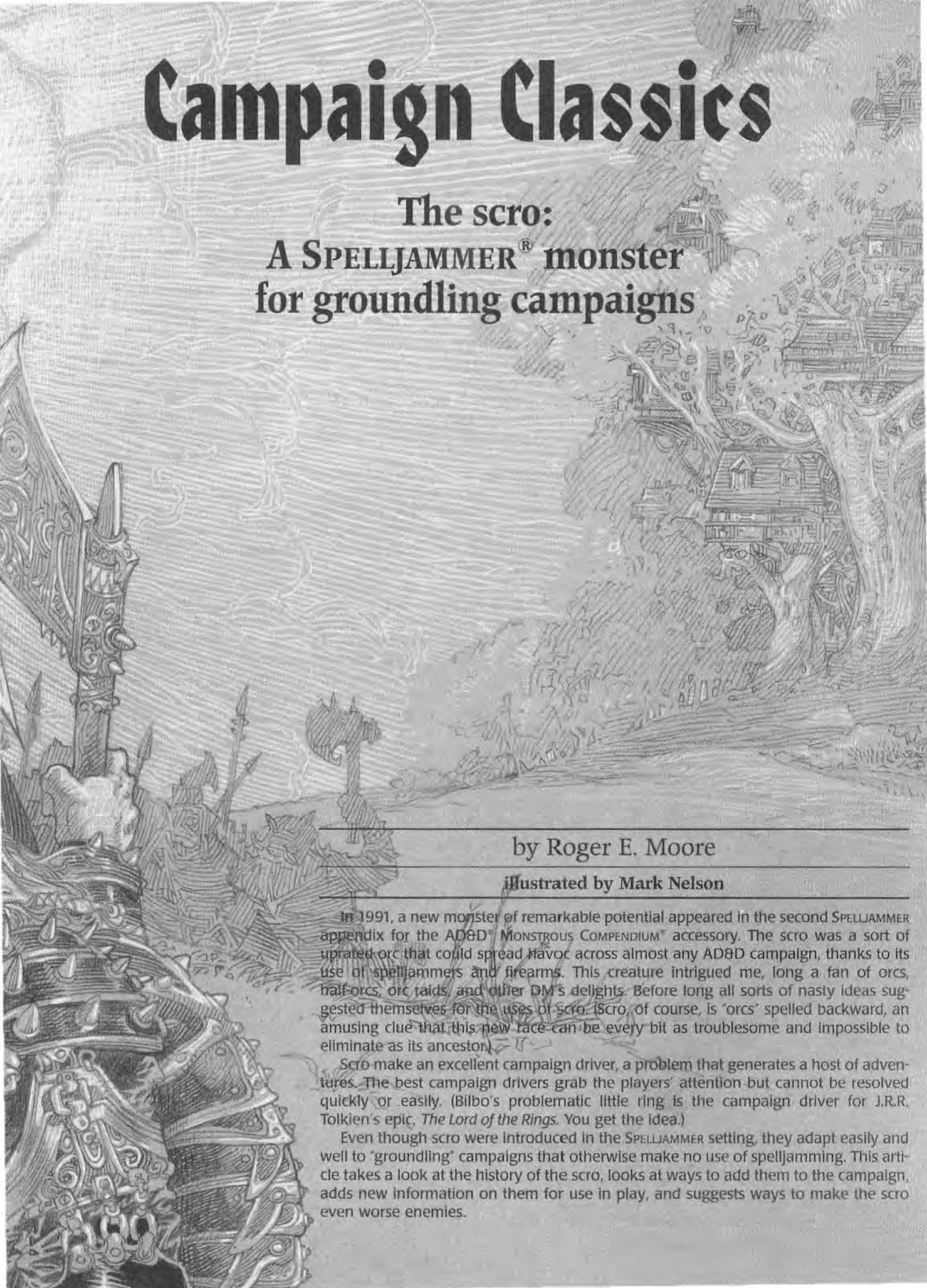
Magical items: None.

Equipment: Light leather armor (gauntlets, jerkin, leggings, boots), elven longbow, bone knife, elven long sword.

Role-playing notes: Foxfire is considered to be the best archer among his people. He will fight to protect not only his clan but also any elves who are in need of his skills with the bow and battle strategy. Despite his warrior's skills, his charm and intelligence would also serve him well in a diplomatic role. He would be the natural choice if the elven people of the Forest of Tethir were to require someone to represent them.

Campaign Classics

The scro: A SPELLJAMMER® monster for groundling campaigns



by Roger E. Moore

illustrated by Mark Nelson

In 1991, a new monster of remarkable potential appeared in the second SPELLJAMMER appendix for the AD&D® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® accessory. The scro was a sort of uprated orc that could spread havoc across almost any AD&D campaign, thanks to its use of spelljammers and firearms. This creature intrigued me, long a fan of orcs, half-orcs, orc raids, and other DM's delights. Before long all sorts of nasty ideas suggested themselves for the uses of scro. (Scro, of course, is "orcs" spelled backward, an amusing clue that this new race can be every bit as troublesome and impossible to eliminate as its ancestor.)

Scro make an excellent campaign driver, a problem that generates a host of adventures. The best campaign drivers grab the players' attention but cannot be resolved quickly or easily. (Bilbo's problematic little ring is the campaign driver for J.R.R. Tolkien's epic, *The Lord of the Rings*. You get the idea.)

Even though scro were introduced in the SPELLJAMMER setting, they adapt easily and well to "groundling" campaigns that otherwise make no use of spelljamming. This article takes a look at the history of the scro, looks at ways to add them to the campaign, adds new information on them for use in play, and suggests ways to make the scro even worse enemies.

The first & second Unhuman Wars

Some historical background is required to get a better picture of where the scro came from and where they are today.

The First Unhuman War (until recently known simply as the Unhuman War or Unhuman Wars) took place about 300–400 years ago across the known spheres. Setting a date for it is difficult, as the war was protracted and subject to sudden fits of activity between which lay long periods of maneuvering and little fighting. The war did not start at the same time in all spheres. The first major battle was at Kule in Greyspace, about the year 185 CY in the Flanaess (almost 400 years ago), when the elven Imperial Fleet began its offensive. This was the largest battle of the war and set the tone for the early period of fighting: a sudden strike by the elves that broke and scattered the humanoids' forces.[1]

Most of the other major battles took place in the next decade, with nearly all humanoids routed or destroyed. Only one humanoid navy, the Combined Goblin Fleet under the command of the half-orc Gralnakh Longtooth, pulled victory from the ashes before it, too, was forced to cease fighting.[2] Some shocking advances in magical weaponry came to light at this time, particularly the elves' ability to destroy small worlds. The most dramatic such event, the Shattering of Borka – a humanoid world attacked by the Imperial Fleet with assistance from elven deities – was witnessed by astrologers on Oerth in the year 201 CY.[3]

Near the war's end, orcish shamans prepared to introduce a doomsday weapon against all elven worlds and bases: the witchlight marauder.[4] A large group of these monsters was hurriedly destroyed by the elves once their presence, powers, and location became known. Several of these horrors are rumored to still exist, hidden away in suspended animation in secret places. Two were recently located.[5]

The witchlight marauder was the ultimate development of what could be called altered-life weapons systems, or the "war mutants project." Parallel programs run by the elven Imperial Fleet and humanoid shamans produced such monstrosities as the chakchak[6], bionid, and spirit warrior (including the legendary zwarth). A few examples of each apparently exist to this day in suspended animation or in active colonies on distant worlds. It is possible that the insectare was also designed as an elven or humanoid weapon during that conflict, but further information is lacking.[7]

When the Imperial Fleet finally destroyed the combined navies of the humanoid races, the latter either abandoned their ships to live as groundlings or fled to very distant crystal spheres to recover their losses. One group of orcs, led by the visionary orc commander Dukagsh (see later), eventually became the scro.

The scro reignited the elven-humanoid conflict in the recent Second Unhuman War (called the War of Revenge by the scro), making a dedicated effort to destroy all elven ships and colonies everywhere. Their stated secondary goal was to gain military control of wildspace and collect taxes for safe passage from all other spelljamming powers, otherwise allowing business to go on uninterrupted – or so they said. It is suspected that the scro actually meant (and still mean) to push every other race but themselves out of wildspace, controlling the high ground for eternity thereafter.

It is difficult to give starting dates for the Second Unhuman War, since the scro didn't enter every crystal sphere at the same moment or attack every world at the same time. Based on a study of the evidence, this war apparently spread to Realmspace just after the Tuigan horde invaded Faerûn (the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign) in 1360 DR. The war also seems to have reached Greyspace, the crystal sphere of Oerth (and the GREYHAWK® campaign), about the time that the Greyhawk Wars began in 582 CY. Some spheres were attacked as much as five years earlier, often in secret and probably as training exercises, to establish advance bases, or to ensure secrecy.

The elven Imperial Fleet in Realmspace, reinforced by spelljammers from Evermeet, forced the scro to retreat after over a dozen battles. Some scro survivors were captured by the mind flayers of Glyth or beholders of H'Catha to suffer awful fates; others were captured or destroyed by the wildspace fleets of Shou Lung or Wa. A few scro ships are hiding out around Garden, using Garden's moons as temporary bases, but they are hunted by the elves and their days are numbered.[8] A small scro fleet entered Realmspace around 1368 DR, orbiting Toril, and made contact with humanoid forces in Faerûn. It sold firearms through contacts in Waterdeep and elsewhere, but this fleet withdrew soon afterward.[9] Its current disposition is unknown.

In Greyspace, an invading scro fleet of Mantis ships linked up with the Borka Retribution Fleet, a ragtag force of spelljammers crewed by various humanoids from the ruined cluster-world Borka that had been in contact with the scro for several decades.[10] The combined force was detected and attacked by every element of the elven Imperial Fleet that could be collected in the sphere, the ships hailing primarily from the Grinder asteroid belt and the cluster-world Greela. Even ships from the privately owned Sindiath Line, an elven passenger- and freight-hauling company, were pressed into emergency military service.[11]

Both sides fought it out at Borka, suffering staggering losses. Sindiath Line survivors fled back to Greela, their home base, but Imperial Fleet elements withdrew to the wildspace inside the Grinder. The scro and their allies moved into the Grinder itself or withdrew to Borka. Both sides have confined themselves to hit-and-run raids and limited patrols since then.[12] Other wildspace forces, particularly several giff mercenary units and the gigantic dwarven-operated armaments company called the Smiths' Coster, are also hunting down the remnants of the scro fleet in the Grinder.[13]

1. See *Lorebook of the Void*, pages 55 and 59, from the SPELLJAMMER boxed set.
2. See the history of the world Armistice, in SJR4 *Practical Planetology*, pages 11–12. More information appears in the SPELLJAMMER novel, *The Radiant Dragon*.
3. See *Lorebook of the Void*, page 91, SPELLJAMMER boxed set; also SJR6 *Greyspace*, pages 54–59.
4. See "Witchlight Marauder" in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM SPELLJAMMER Appendix II; in SJS1 *Goblins' Return*, pages 43–45 and 63; and in SJQ1 *The Heart of the Enemy*, page 94. See also the SPELLJAMMER novel, *The Radiant Dragon*.
5. See *The Radiant Dragon* and the adventures SJS1 and SJQ1.
6. See POLYHEDRON™ issue #55, page 15, "Chakchak."
7. See MC9 MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM SPELLJAMMER Appendix II, "Bionid," "Spirit Warrior," and "Insectare."
8. For details on these worlds, fleets, and battles, see SJR2 *Realmspace* and the *War Captain's Guide*, chapters three and four, from the *War Captain's Companion* boxed set.
9. See the story "Gunne Runner" in the FORGOTTEN REALMS anthology, *Realms of Magic*.
10. See SJR6 *Greyspace*, pages 54–59, for details on Borka.
11. The Sindiath Line is described in CGR1 *The Complete Spacefarer's Guide*, pages 90–91.
12. See the *War Captain's Guide*, chapter three (especially pages 19–20), from the War Captain's Companion boxed set). Ships used by the scro and their allies are described in the *Ship Recognition Manual* from the same boxed set.
13. See "Sorcerous Six-Shooters," in DRAGON Issue #232, pages 34–40.

After many savage battles, the Second Unhuman War has largely petered out, particularly in the first two years after it reached any sphere. Some spheres were not greatly affected by it (e.g., Krynnspace). An attempt by a scro battlewagon, the *Eviscerator,* to gain control of the gigantic ship *Spelljammer* failed.[14]

The full aftereffects of the Second Unhuman War have not been realized. It is likely that the war's main long-term effect was to break the elves' control over wildspace traffic, opening a period in which every world or nation's wildspace forces can gain local supremacy. Unfortunately, a long period of chaos marked by piracy, hit-and-run raids, and petty wars across wildspace seems unavoidable before the situation stabilizes again, perhaps decades from now.

An uncomfortable rumor continues to spread through wildspace, however, that what has passed is only the first phase of a prolonged Second Unhuman War. Wildspace forces commanded by ogres are rumored to be preparing for an equally devastating assault on the known spheres, from a distant world orbiting the "Steel Star." Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun of Waterdeep is among those who claim this is true; he warns all who will listen to make preparations for the war to come. With the Imperial Fleet as weakened as it is now and wildspace forces so chaotic, this unpleasant possibility could hold untold horrors for many worlds.[15]

The scro invade

Scro can reach almost any AD&D campaign world by spelljammer, but their reasons for being in the playing area have a great effect on game play. The scro have no wish to conquer large worlds, though a small world might be attacked for strategic reasons, serving as a naval base or colony world to strengthen scro forces in a certain sphere. Then, too, if the elves of one world could be attacked and wiped out, so much the better for the future.

A campaign centering around the coming of the scro should start around the time the Second Unhuman War reaches the campaign world's crystal sphere. The following are possible ways for the scro to meet the PCs, and the consequences thereof.

❖ **Hunting:** It might be that the scro arrived on this world on a brief mission, to recover an item stolen from them or to recapture or slay prisoners who escaped aboard a stolen spelljammer or using spells. (Such prisoners might be evil and as dangerous to the PCs as to the scro.) Perhaps an elven ship that fought the scro has crashed, and the scro are hunting down the survivors. In any event, the scro won't leave until they are convinced that their prey is dead, their property recovered, and all loose ends tied up – or unless they meet enormous resistance and abandon their search. Tying up loose ends might require the capture or killing of the PCs, of course.

The campaign to get rid of these troublesome scro will be difficult, but it is the shortest and least damaging (relatively speaking) of the following alternatives, since the scro have the ability to leave. However, they might plan to return

❖ **Marooned:** Another way for scro to show up in a DM's campaign world is by sheer accident. A damaged scro spelljammer crashes with many survivors, who then attempt to repair their ship or steal another spelljammer. The survivors set up a fortified base camp, make allies of other evil creatures, enslave good beings, and kill all the elves they can find. In this set-up, the scro cause damage out of proportion to their few numbers by recruiting, training, and arming other humanoids. They might drive off powerful creatures such as dragons, which then go marauding through civilized lands. Until the scro are destroyed or leave, they are a pain – but they might leave behind plenty of organized evil partners who carry on their trouble-making legacy.

❖ **Scouting:** A small force of scro deliberately land on the world and conceal their spelljammer, using spells, a cave, or camouflage. They seek trade and alliances with evil humanoids, wizards, and cities that can give their fleet support and shelter during the long Second Unhuman War. Their allies might also carry out attacks against elven targets, perhaps even search for Imperial Fleet spelljammers believed to be in the area.

Though again the scro are few in number, the direction and support they give their evil allies causes enormous trouble in the campaign world. Because this was a planned landing, these scro are even better prepared for their mission than marooned ones. They are certainly prepared for a long stay. A set-up like this was described in an editorial in *DRAGON® MAGAZINE* issue #181.

❖ **Raiding:** The scro have come to blow things up. They have found a

14. See the SPELLJAMMER novel, *The Ultimate Helm.*
15. See pages 55–56 of SJR1 *Lost Ships:* "Ogre Kingship," "Archimperator," and the sidebar, "The Steel Star."

A scro bibliography

Rather than reprint all of the published information on scro here, I offer the following references, which should give a complete picture of the powers and personalities of the scro.

❖ MC9 MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM SPELLJAMMER Appendix II, "Scro": This sheet provides the basic information on the scro. Though adult scro have only three hit dice each, they are highly intelligent and organized; anyone who thought that the kobolds of the DRAGON MOUNTAIN™ boxed adventure were terrible should consider the possibilities inherent in running groups of mid-level scro against high-level PCs. Scro armor, weapons, leaders, fighting techniques, customs, social habits, history, proficiencies, homeworld characteristics, spelljammers, and goals are described here. Note in particular their use of firearms, unarmed combat, and poison, as well as their magic resistance (10%) and war priests (5th-level cleric/wizards).

❖ CGR1 *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook:* Chapter two has detailed information on generating scro PCs. Scro should be used only as nonplayer characters in a campaign, given their evil nature; they make superb villains. However, the information in CGR1 is invaluable for generating important NPCs. DMs with *The Complete Book of Villains* should use it to design scro leaders and organizations. (Note: Dukagsh, the first Almighty Leader of the scro and now the sole scro deity, is misspelled as "Dukgash" in CGR1, repeating a misspelling from one spot in MC9.)

Carefully study the information on proficiencies, classes, kits, personalities, spells, and other game data that can be used to develop unique scro. For instance, a powerful scro fighter with the Marine kit, separated from his fellows, might settle down on a moon circling the campaign world. There, he could build up a group of followers and ships (using Table 18, CGR1, page 104) with which he raids the campaign world and destroys elven strongholds. A scro thief could be a military saboteur/scout dropped off on a world to disrupt operations at an elven spelljamming base.

❖ SJS1 *Goblins' Return:* In this adventure (the first of a miniseries of two), PCs become involved in the Second Unhuman War, when the scro and their humanoid allies attack all elven ships and worlds across the known spheres. The PCs are sent to infiltrate a secret scro base in Moragspace, which houses a fleet composed of various ships crewed by scro and allied humanoids. The unique Gamaro Base and its deadly cargo are detailed here; much useful information on the scro and their allies, including the scro Mantis ship plans, is given here. The "Rules of Gamaro Base" (page 12) are likely to be repeated almost verbatim in many scro bases. Also, the scro "MC" page updates the MC9 listing.

❖ SJQ1 *Heart of the Enemy:* The PCs from SJS1 are now sent on the second part of their adventure to Shadowspace (greatly detailed here), to recover a key that allows control over the scro's superweapon at Gamaro Base, with a final battle at Gamaro Base.

❖ *The Maelstrom's Eye* and *The Radiant Dragon:* Volumes three and four of the SPELLJAMMER Cloakmaster Cycle contain considerable information on the fleets and personalities of the scro forces during the Second Unhuman War. *The Radiant Dragon* describes a scro attempt to give spelljammers to the humanoids of the planet Armistice (described in SJR4 *Practical Planetology,* pages 10–13), while acquiring a superweapon left over from the First Unhuman War. The disastrous fate of Armistice should be noted for future reference. Scattered details on the scro and the Second Unhuman War appear in volumes five and six of the Cloakmaster Cycle: *The Broken Sphere* and *The Ultimate Helm.*

❖ *War Captain's Companion* boxed set: Information on the ships and outcome of the Second Unhuman War appear in Book 1, *War Captain's Guide,* and Book 2, *Ship Recognition Manual.* A scro fleet might be composed of many types of ships, especially if they have humanoid allies.

spelljamming elven culture or other group hostile to them, and they've decided to teach their foes a thing or two about scro fury. Combat will be immediate and intense, with no holds barred and no quarter given. The scro fling themselves into battle the moment their quarry is found and the time is right. The scro might also loot treasuries, warehouses, museums, chart rooms, libraries, and so forth during the raid, destroying what they cannot carry off. (Remember that scro are smart and selective about what they take and destroy.)

The PCs might become aware of this attack if they interrupt a scouting mission conducted just before the raid. The fight will be brutal, and the PCs will be tested to their limits. A prolonged battle could last for weeks as the scro make repeated strikes or hold ground near their target. The scro leave if they win the fight or believe they must regroup and find reinforcements – but in the latter case, they return, stronger than before.

❖ **Settlement:** This is the next-to-the-worst option for a campaign world's future. The scro have explored this presumably small and lightly defended world, and they now plan to settle all or part of it as a colony world, building their own cities and spelljammer bases. From here they plan to control the local crystal sphere and all wildspace traffic therein. The scro have humanoid armies raid road and sea traffic, interrupt communications, destroy towns, and do all other dirty work while the scro handle wildspace problems. At the very least, the scro try to destroy all elven cultures they can find and forge alliances or noninterference pacts with other nations.

❖ **Destruction:** The scro want to completely ruin this world and slay its troublesome elven population. They have recovered a primary witchlight marauder and plan to drop it on the world, turning it loose to strip the land bare of life in about a year. This is obviously bad news for the campaign world.

The first two options work best for low-level PCs, especially if the scro are lost, injured, ill-prepared, or unlikely to receive back-up. The third option is good for mid-level groups, as only one or two enemy ships have heavily armed and well-prepared crews. The fourth option is best for mid- to high-level campaigns, with up to several hundred scro of all sorts appearing with spelljammers, siege equipment, and powerful magical spells and devices. The last option is for a high-level campaign in which the forces of Good must play out every last trick to save the world. A witchlight marauder is a rare and potent weapon used only against heavily defended, elven or otherwise dangerous worlds. Several other encounters with scro should precede this event, working from minor contact up to full-scale war. The avatars of important local deities might aid the heroes if a witchlight marauder is landed.

Remember the consequences if the PCs defeat the scro. If the PCs gain a spelljammer with scro markings, it will be attacked by many other ships in wildspace, particularly the Imperial Fleet and other scro who see that the ship is in the hands of non-scro. An alliance with elven ground and wildspace forces is likely if the party works to save local elven cultures. The influx of new and peculiar devices, armor, weapons, and so forth will have an effect on the campaign, too.

Scro religion

The backbone of scro civilization is their militant religion, established roughly 300 years ago. The scro recognize only one god, the demipower Dukagsh, whom they follow fanatically. The priesthood of Dukagsh is detailed here using the format found in the superb FORGOTTEN REALMS accessory, *Faiths & Avatars.*

Dukagsh

(Almighty Dukagsh, The First Almighty Leader, The Scro Father)

Demipower of the Prime Material Plane, LE

PORTFOLIO:	The scro, with focus on their physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, and military excellence
ALIASES:	None
DOMAIN NAME:	Prime Material Plane/ Dukagsh, a planet in Dukagshspace (location unknown)
SUPERIOR:	None
ALLIES:	None
FOES:	All deities either worshiped by elves or who give support to elves
SYMBOL:	A palm-sized steel circle on which two open, orcish eyes are engraved
WOR. ALIGN.:	LN, LE, N, NE, CN, CE

Dukagsh (doo-KAHGSH or doo-KAHG-ish) is a demipower honored only by the scro. In life, Dukagsh was a huge orc, a warrior (and possibly a spellcaster) during the latter part of the First Unhuman War, approximately 360 years ago. When his command was destroyed during a wildspace battle with the elven Imperial Fleet, he declared himself the Almighty Leader of his own force, took charge of the surviving ships and crews, and led a brilliant retreat across the crystal spheres, escaping elven retribution and collecting the remains of other orcish military units as he went. Upon finding a distant and largely uninhabited crystal sphere three years later, he ordered his rag-tag fleet to explore and settle the best world available, making it their new home.

Dukagsh had a personal vision that his people would eventually recover from their disastrous war and take revenge on the elves. In the last thirty-five years of his life, he singlehandedly injected the principles of a proud, competent, and rational warrior society into his followers. He gave structure and purpose to the lives of badly demoralized soldiers and instilled in all a sense of destiny, loyalty, obedience, and racial pride. His leadership and management abilities were such that his people came to worship him as a god, gradually abandoning the orcish pantheon they had previously followed to make offerings to him in secret. Upon his death, this cult came out into the open and became the official religion of the orcish homeworld, now renamed Dukagsh. Those orcs who followed Dukagsh's teachings most closely found that they were able to gain and cast spells, and a complex priesthood was swiftly established. Dukagsh uses no avatar, by his own choice, intending that his followers gain strength and wisdom through self-reliance.

Over the last 300 years, the orcs who fled to their new homeworld changed radically. Whether it was through following Dukagsh's constant emphasis on physical well-being and conditioning, a physical or magical characteristic of their new world, spontaneous mutation, or some other cause (perhaps Dukagsh's divine willpower), the orcs became stronger and more capable, developing long-buried capacities and achieving heights never before dreamed of by any orc before. Overseeing this astounding transformation are the Chosen of Dukagsh, the scro priests.

In either religious or secular art, only the eyes of Dukagsh are depicted. To show more than that invites the wrath of priests and lay followers alike for blasphemy and presumption. Dukagsh's followers

are so varied in physical appearance that to show Dukagsh in detail might cause the scro who look most like him to feel superior to their followers, destroying the fabric of scro society and leading to civil war.

Other manifestations

On rare occasions during major celebrations and memorial services by the scro, on their homeworld or elsewhere, this demipower manifests himself as two great, glowing, greenish eyes looking down from the sky on his people, showing his favor. Though this manifestation does not grant any magical powers to his followers, scro are so heartened by this vision that they receive a +4 bonus against all *fear*-type spells or powers for the next 1d4+1 hours, with a Morale rating of 18.

As noted earlier, Dukagsh prefers that his scro be self-reliant and learn to develop and rely on their own skills and powers. He does not send warnings, emergency aid, or punishments to his followers, but if a worshiper performs a truly extraordinary deed that benefits and strengthens the scro (e.g., a war priest develops a new spell or a warrior develops a new weapon system), the scro is granted up to 50,000 XP as a bonus and further gains the ability to cast a first-level cleric spell, *cause light wounds*, at any time of the recipient's choice (in combat with elves is the best time, of course). These benefits may be gained multiple times, and any scro who earns such honor is accorded great respect in their society.

Dukagsh takes no offense if a scro utters an oath using his name. In the heat of anger or battle, many scro swear by the Tomb of Dukagsh or the Eyes of Dukagsh, but they don't believe they are degrading Dukagsh's name in doing so. Using Dukagsh's name in an act of cowardice is blasphemy, however, and punished by death.

The church

CLERGY:	Clerics (C), war priests (WP)
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LE (C: LE, LN)
TURN UNDEAD:	C:Yes; WP: Yes
CMND. UNDEAD:	C: No; WP: Yes

All members of the clergy of Dukagsh (i.e., the Chosen of Dukagsh) receive the following bonus nonweapon proficiencies: religion (Dukagsh) and religion (elven). War priests must learn certain other proficiencies as well (see later).

The Chosen regularly advise the warrior leaders of Dukagsh and the scro colony worlds that have been established. A powerful 8th-level single-classed priest, about whom little is known except his name — the Eyes of the Chosen — is the head of the church on Dukagsh. He works with the Ultimate High Overlord on policy matters and advises the 24 tribal Captains of that world.

It would be difficult to find a more dedicated lay following among evil creatures than that for Dukagsh. The Chosen of Dukagsh enjoy enormous popularity among all scro, and the Second Unhuman War has only strengthened this cult. Where the scro have won, their superiority is proclaimed and celebrated. Where they have lost, they believe they are being tested and must persevere to gain victory. Nothing shakes their belief in their racial superiority and destiny.

The internal structure of the church is highly regimented. Normal clerics appear only on scro-settled worlds, especially Dukagsh, and can be male or female, and lawful evil or lawful neutral. These are the directors and protectors of scro homes, collective families, and young. War priests are cleric/wizards, versatile spellcasters who are rigorously trained until they reach 5th level in each class before being posted to a fleet.

Though scro priests can be cruel, unforgiving, and ruthless with their enemies or the rare troublemakers in scro society, they are also reasonable and willing to parlay with enemies, honoring truces and not harming diplomats. Humans, dwarves, and most other races caught in the Second Unhuman War have reported that they received remarkably fair treatment as prisoners of the scro, though punishments for infractions could be severe. However, scro regard lying to or breaking a promise to an elf as proper; elves are marked for destruction by any means possible, often after prolonged torture during a morale-boosting ceremony for their soldiers. Every elven force that has surrendered to a scro force has shortly thereafter disappeared, though its fate can be easily guessed.

Temples to Dukagsh are stupendous, blocklike, one-story stone structures covering several city blocks, often on natural or artificial hills. The temples are marked by numerous pillars and columns, red banners and flags (symbolic of war, fire, and blood), bas-reliefs of heroic scro under the Eyes of Dukagsh, and occasional domes or spires with the Eyes of Dukagsh on their tops. Altars are always stone, designed with gutters and outlets for possible use as sacrificial stones for elven prisoners. Altars are placed in huge amphitheaters, some seating up to 20,000 or more scro at once.

The full range of ceremonies for Dukagsh is great but largely oriented with an emphasis on warfare. The day that Dukagsh died and became a deity is the holiest day of the scro religious calendar. Short daily services are also conducted separately for soldiers and civilians. (In the militaristic scro society, it is difficult to decide where the boundary between civilians and soldiers lies. The director of a paramilitary scro youth club could be a retired military officer, for instance.)

The priests and followers of Dukagsh will work with other spacefaring humanoids (kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, bugbears, and ogres) so long as these allies recognize that the scro are in charge. Many scro refuse to work with orcs, whom they regard as inferior versions of themselves, but practical reality leads other scro to accept orcish units into their fleets and armies and even train non-scro humanoids as marines when scro ranks are badly depleted. No non-scro can ever become a priest of Dukagsh, however.

Dogma: The Chosen of Dukagsh teach that the multiverse resists the scro at every turn, as a stone mountain resists a scro with a chisel. But the scro can also blast the mountain away with forethought, determination, patience, and lots of *smoke powder*. The scro must be self-reliant and strong, as no one will ever help them in their war to regain control of the heavens. Only through hard work, planning, and combat will the scro take and keep their rightful place as the lords of wildspace. War is the ultimate instrument of scro policy, but it must be administered carefully and with intelligence. Time is on the scro's side, as the scro will never surrender.

The elves, who started the First Unhuman War, are the ultimate racial enemy of the scro. All other peoples will eventually be made subjects of the scro, fit for nothing but slavery. Through fire and blood will the scro show the multiverse the great and true master race of all time, and the one who revealed the path, Dukagsh, will be feared and obeyed everywhere, in wildspace and on all worlds.

Day-to-day activities: The daily duties of a priest of Dukagsh are aimed at strengthening the scro in every possible way: physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, what have you. Aside from conducting worship services, a scro priest counsels parishioners, leads youth

groups, advises lay leaders and others outside the clergy, and evaluates the health (in every sense) of the populace. Scro clergy seem remarkably honest and aboveboard compared to other humanoids, as they have eliminated much of the factional infighting that plagued their ranks centuries ago when they were mere orcs. Scro clergy are also expected to act on their words and teachings, leading their flock by example. Above all, they put purpose into all deeds. The mere infliction of pain on an enemy is a worthless pursuit; pain must be inflicted in order to instruct, to teach the enemy to obey orders or to accept the domination and superiority of the scro.

Holy days/important ceremonies: The day Dukagsh's mortal form died is the holiest day. Memorial services for his death and celebrations of his assumption of godhood take place across all scro-colonized worlds and in wildspace. All other major religious ceremonies are conducted before and after a battle or campaign (regardless of the fight's outcome), and on days celebrating a world's conquest or a great battle victory.

Major centers of worship: The most important scro centers of worship are on the planet Dukagsh, which has hundreds of temples and uncounted numbers of lesser shrines. No temples to Dukagsh are known in Realmspace, Greyspace, or any other major sphere that has not yet been conquered by the scro.

Affiliated Orders: No major orders are known that coexist with the religion of Dukagsh except for the scro wildspace navies and the scro marines. Scro marine officers often have a strong religious streak and take religious training though they do not cast spells. Some humanoid-dominated groups work closely with scro war priests but won't always follow their commands.

Priestly vestments: On a day-to-day basis, war priests normally wear the same black studded-leather armor, black open-faced helmets, and dark cloaks that other troops wear, though with a necklace medallion showing the Eyes of Dukagsh and a shoulder patch with tribal and religious insignia. Weapons are always carried. All equipment and armor is of the highest quality and carefully cleaned and maintained. War priests of less than 5th level, in training on their homeworld, wear the same garb.

Normal clerics of Dukagsh, who live and work among civilians, rarely wear armor or carry weapons unless needed. These clerics wear dark garments, boots, and cloaks with necklace medallions and shoulder patches showing their tribe and clerical status. A neat, professional appearance is considered important.

Adventuring garb: In combat or on adventures, war priests can wear any armor available. Magical armor, shields, gloves, boots, and protective devices are widely used if found. Scro take excellent care of their gear. Clerics do not normally fight or adventure but use the same garb if necessary. Scro rarely consider disguising themselves, but might adopt the look of a local orc tribe for a short time.

War priests (Sons of Dukagsh)

War priests are essentially "special priests," but not specialty priests as described in the AD&D game. War priests are multiclassed cleric/mages who gain special bonuses from their status.

Requirements:	Intelligence 12, Wisdom 12
Prime Req.:	Strength, Wisdom
Alignment:	Lawful evil
Weapons:	All weapons are allowed for use by specialty priests, including *smoke powder* firearms or explosives, missile weapons, any sort of grenade, and poisons of any sort.
Armor:	Any sort of armor is allowed, but a helmet must be open-faced so the war priest can shout commands clearly.
Major Spheres:	All, charm, combat, elemental, guardian, healing, protection, summoning, war
Minor Spheres:	Divination, law, necromantic, wards
Magical Items:	Any items that can be used by priests, wizards, or any class can be used by war priests
Req. Profs:	Healing, herbalism, spellcraft, languages (elvish). Reading/writing (elvish) is optional but helpful. Languages (common) and reading/writing (common) are recommended for NPCs operating in the DM's current campaign. At least one combat-related proficiency is often taken as well.
Bonus Profs:	Religion (Dukagsh), religion (elven).

Granted powers

❖ War priests attack using the warrior THAC0 tables. They make saving throws using either the priest or wizard saving-throw tables, whichever is more beneficial.

❖ War priests of levels 1–4 attack once per round, but those of level 5 attack three times every two rounds.

❖ War priests of 5th level gain a +2 saving throw vs. all poisons from earlier training and use of antitoxins.

The Chosen of Dukagsh have developed some creative minor spells known only to themselves. Most of these spells have combat applications, such as *produce delayed flame* (1st level), which can be cast upon a satchel charge, bomb, or wooden structure to cause it to ignite up to an hour later. Another spell, a 3rd-level wizard spell called *elven double*, gives a scro the illusory appearance of an elf. Specific details on these spells can be worked out by DMs as needed.

Improvements & suggestions

As designed, scro are pretty bad. Of course, this doesn't mean that a clever, nasty DM can't make them a little more challenging for high-level heroes.

❖ **Intimidation:** The Ravenloft® campaign highlights the power of what you could call "imaginative description" by a DM. Players are less intimidated by an ogre than they are by "an enormous, grunting, stinking brute with warty yellow hide, tangled and greasy black hair, knotted muscles to shame a draft horse, and a shattered oak limb clutched in a fist the size of a baked ham." What the DM says and implies about an encounter has an enormous impact on how players react to it.

With that in mind, the DM should study the descriptions of the scro, then present them in a dramatic and frightening light. The PCs are likely to have seen orcs, but not orcs who stand proud and erect, whose eyes glow a sickly green in the dark, who have gems and gold jewelry on their fangs and ears (possibly with other sorts of startling, body-piercing ornaments), and who come in many colors and sizes but all work together as a single, tight unit. Instead of filthy, grunting, brutish orcs, you have grim, efficient, extremely skilled and capable orcs with an alien, unworldly look – who carry guns.

The DM can develop simple gestures for scro NPCs that further set them apart from other encounters, if the scro are spied upon by PCs. An officer and regular soldiers exchange a salute: a raised, clenched right fist, palm inward, forearm vertical and upper arm straight forward. An engineer sits on a log, reading plans, then pulls a complex drawing implement from a side pocket and begins using it. A soldier wearing unusual medallions and a long cloak (a war priest) kneels by a stack of wood under a cooking pot, puts his hand on a log, then casually steps back, chatting with other troops – and the log catches fire, to no one's apparent surprise. Actions like these can throw the players off balance so they won't know what to expect.

❖ **High characteristics:** One basic way in which a DM can upgrade the scro is to boost a few of their characteristics. Note that most scro are already fairly tough, with an average Strength of 16 and Constitution of 15. Factor the bonuses for these scores into their combat abilities and hit points. An average Intelligence of 13 or 14 allows for additional languages to be known, too (such as the common tongue), and aids proficiency checks.

Out of each group of 10 scro, give one exceptional strength, another exceptional intelligence, and so forth. Strong scro carry lots of equipment, break down doors, and do lots of damage in battle. Smart scro plan strategy, build traps, and (in the case of wizards) learn more spells. Agile scro use missile weapons and, as thieves, perform great feats of daring. Wise scro might be war priests – with additional spells and no chance of spell malfunction! Charismatic scro are leaders and interrogators. Healthy scro of any class have more hit points. Scro sergeants, guards, captains, bodyguards, war priests, and Almighty Leaders each have more than one exceptional characteristic.

Scro with low characteristics are possible but not likely, as the scro are very particular about who they let into their military ranks. A scro weak in one characteristic can be strong in another respect, however. A low-strength scro might be a thief, a sickly scro could be psionic, and a stupid scro might be very strong.

❖ **Magical items:** Anyone with access to the *Encyclopedia Magica*™ volumes has thousands of possibilities at hand for use by scro groups. Clever DMs can select low-power, short-term items such as potions, scrolls, and minor wands for use by the scro. Remember that scro have a 10% magic resistance, meaning that one must check for this each time he picks up a magical item; 90% of the time the item will work, but 10% of the time it will not.

❖ **Firearms & explosives:** Firearms using *smoke powder* are found with many scro troops, though the rarity of *smoke powder* often limits the use of such weapons to elite troops and officers. Satchel charges, grenades, mines, and other sorts of personally transported explosives are also used against fortified positions or as booby-traps. Some war priests have a minor spell that acts like *delayed blast fireball,* causing a package bomb to catch fire and explode after a predetermined time (as described in *The Maelstrom's Eye,* chapter 16). Saboteurs make extensive use of these devices against fortifications and other large structures. Scro have never considered using bombs as terrorist devices against civilian targets, as they see this as wasteful and misguided policy: Other soldiers, not civilians, are their enemy.

Some humanoid tribes who have been taught to use firearms by the scro have developed a dueling tradition, but duels (and poison use) are strictly forbidden in scro society.

❖ **Poison:** Scro have no compunctions about using poison against their enemies, but they use poison rationally. Crossbow bolts and arrows are far more effective if poisoned, but poisons are kept in small unbreakable jars and handled with care to minimize casualties among archers. Poisons are transported with care to avoid breakage or theft. Scro archers using poisoned missiles are known to act alone as snipers or assassins.

In extreme cases, scro saboteurs have poisoned wells, streams, ponds, and other sources of drinking water used by enemy forces. However, they use poisons that deteriorate and become harmless after a few hours, so that scro forces can later take control of and use those same water sources.

The scro have their own alchemists on Dukagsh working on new types of poisons, including gases, ingested toxins, and blade or missile poisons. The DM should allow for a variety of poisons to be introduced, including those that cause paralysis or delirium to allow the capture of foes, blindness or vomiting to incapacitate attackers, and massive damage to stop large monsters. Antitoxins are also developed, so a small force of protected scro could attack a much larger enemy force during a battlefield gas attack, much as happened during our World War I; large spelljammers could similarly be attacked and boarded by scro marines.

❖ **Tools & miscellaneous devices:** Scro are highly intelligent, and every large force of scro will have a wide selection of tools and construction materials if they plan to be "groundside" for an extended stay. All sorts of carpentry, metalworking, blacksmithing, leatherworking, digging, engineering, and butchering implements might be found. The value of tools seems questionable until you consider what scro can build with them: forts, ditches, castles, spelljammer bases, siege machines, towns and cities, temples, walls, aqueducts, dams, etc. Groundling scro can span chasms, delve into caverns, alter the course of rivers, cut forests, burn prairies, drain swamps, and otherwise change the landscape in dramatic ways in a short period of time. The DM should be creative in carrying out the scro's plans for destroying elves.

A creative DM can thumb through AD&D accessories detailing various cultures and borrow interesting tools and devices from them for the scro's use. (The scro have nothing against using any tool so long as it does the job.) A bizarre tinker-gnome device that drills holes in solid rock might be used – with care, of course.

❖ **Weapon specialization:** If *The Complete Spacefarer's Guide* is used for detailing scro soldiers, examine the rules for weapon specialization in the *Player's Handbook.* Many scro could adopt an interest in a particular weapon, perhaps a family, tribal, or unit favorite. Imagine specialist archer or crossbow units, or a company of long-sword specialists ("Hey, how can *all* these orcs attack twice in a round?"). War priests cannot use specialization, but other leader types can – and almost certainly do. Note that scro warriors of 4th and 5th level get three attacks every two rounds with melee weapons; those of 6th level and above get two attacks per round.

❖ **Martial arts:** According to MC9 and SJS1, the scro already know the fundamentals of unarmed combat. There is no reason why scro cannot have encountered foes who use many forms of martial arts, which the scro carefully studied and improved upon, developing their own unarmed combat styles and enriching their martial prowess. The DM should consider allowing lightly armored scro troops to use punching, hand chops, standing and leaping kicks, head butts, and other "cinematic" unarmed attacks in close quarters. Opponents can be disarmed, stunned, knocked down or

thrown backwards, immobilized, or knocked unconscious. Martial arts styles can be borrowed from the AD&D 1st Edition *Oriental Adventures* and from articles in past issues of *Dragon Magazine* (particularly #122, #127, #136, and #164).

❖ **Nonweapon proficiencies:** During their basic education, all scro receive the bonus nonweapon proficiencies of reading/writing (scro), languages (scro), and local history (scro and their homeworld, Dukagsh). The scro language is a variant of the orcish tongue originally taught by the deities of the orcish pantheon, known across many spheres.

Scro soldiers take other proficiencies related to survival and warfare. According to SJQ1 *The Heart of the Enemy,* scro soldiers normally each have three of the following: armorer, blind-fighting, endurance, land-based riding, reading/writing (non-scro language), rope use, running, tracking, and weaponsmithing. High-ranked soldiers have more proficiencies, of course. Many soldiers take languages (elvish) and reading/writing (elvish) to aid their war against the elves, often serving as translators and interrogators as well as shouting out battlefield insults in Elvish at their enemies. Two-weapon fighting is also a popular skill. Explore the possibilities, especially in *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook,* pages 63–66. The common tongue of a particular world or region and the languages of other humanoids such as hobgoblins should be known by some scro to benefit communication with their allies.

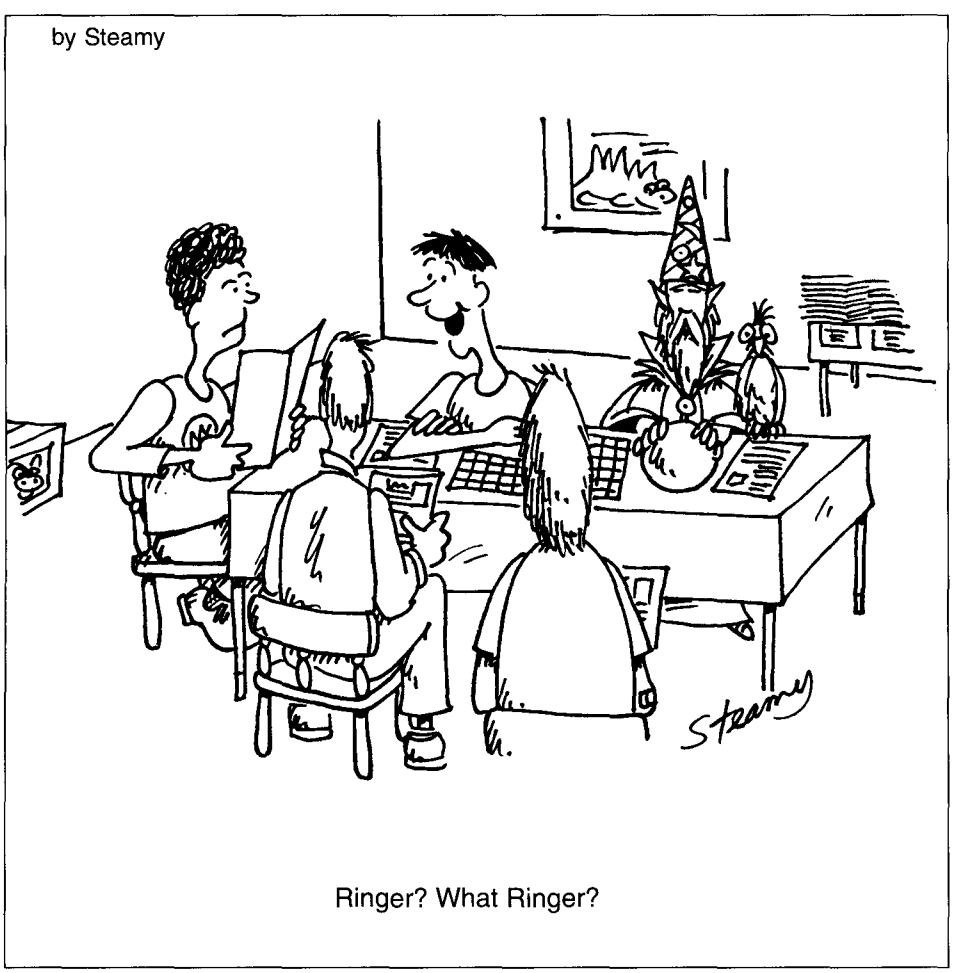
❖ **New spells:** New clerical and wizard spells of 1st to 3rd level should be considered for war priests, and higher-level spells for single-classed wizards and priests on scro homeworlds. The DM can borrow spells from sources such as *Oriental Adventures* or *Arabian Adventures,* rename them, and modify them to suit the campaign.

❖ **Specialist wizards:** Additionally, a single-classed scro mage might be a specialist wizard, though this violates the rule in Table 3, page 16, of *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook,* and the rules for specialist wizards on page 31 in the *Player's Handbook.* However, if gnomes can be multiclassed specialist wizards (illusionist/thieves), then maybe a particularly gifted scro can do it, too. The end result – challenging the PCs – is worth it. A 5th-level war priest with training as a necromancer and a wisdom of 18 would then have 10 wizard spells (at least three of them necromantic) and 13 priest spells – not bad!

❖ **Psionics:** Certain rare scro can develop wild talents, as per *The Complete Psionics Handbook.* Once this becomes known to scro priests, they see that these scro reach their full potential as champions of the race. Psionic scro are well protected and often carefully integrated into military units to make the most effective use of their talents. Imagine meeting a scro assault team whose captain has Danger Sense, a scout with All-Around Vision or Radial Navigation, an interrogator with Inflict Pain or ESP, or a scro saboteur with Mass Domination or Death Field. Telepathic scro, mind-reading scro, time-traveling scro, life-draining scro – hey, you thought mind flayers were bad.

Study *The Complete Psionics Handbook's* section on wild talents (pages 19–21). Using the guidelines on page 19, only one average scro in 200 has a wild talent, which doesn't seem like much unless you consider the huge homeworld population of Dukagsh. Perhaps one scro in 1,000 is better. Leaders, having more hit dice, have better chances for wild talents. Sergeants and guards, having only 4 HD, also have a 0.5% chance to be psionic, but captains, bodyguards, 5th-level war priests, and Almighty Leaders each have a 1% chance. Leaders with exceptional Intelligence, Wisdom, and Constitution scores have improved chances for gaining wild talents.

❖ **Other options:** Scro can have wolves or similar creatures as pets, and "K-9" units of guards or bomb-sniffers (or elf-sniffers) could be formed. Scro have infravision; see the article on this power in Dragon issue #211 for details on how this can be used to their advantage. Mutant scro, such as General Vorr from *The Maelstrom's Eye,* might make their appearance. Let your imagination run free, and give your players something to talk about for years to come.



Ringer? What Ringer?

Roger Moore is a creative analyst for TSR, Inc. He wrote the Spelljammer novel The Malstrom's Eye *and has written numerous articles for* Dragon® Magazine.

Fantasy Adventure

introduction by Ed Greenwood

Well met! I am Elminster of Shadowdale, thy guide to the unfolding glories of the lands of Faerûn on the world of Toril, the lands we call the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting.

That the Realms are, in thy terms, one of the most popular and detailed fantasy worlds ever created, home to over half a hundred writers and designers who strive to bring ye ever more wonders of the world once roamed only by Ed of the Greenwood, and a little later by a handful of players. The Realms – to ye – are novels and adventures and sourcebooks.

Magic rules in the Realms, be it the dastardly spell-intrigues of the Phaerimm or the drow, the bumbling plots of the Zhentarim or the Red Wizards of Thay or the laughable Cult of the Dragon, or the careful craftings of the Harpers or the Chosen of Mystra, such as myself. I could go on for pages extolling the virtues of my world, but if I tell ye that it holds steaming jungles and icy glaciers, pirate ships and storms to sink them in, vast howling deserts and dragons to fly over them, teeming cities of fat merchants and smiling dancers and sly rogues in plenty, and knights in gleaming armor who gallop hither and yon on steeds to right wrongs and wage red war, then (I hope) ye'll have the basic picture.

In this current year, in the unfolding series of Realms products I've sighed over (in my spell-concealed visits to the TSR offices), I've seen major novels that explore the rich kingdom of Cormyr; delve further into the proud and tragic history of Drizzt Do'Urden; and continue the sagas of the Bedine witch Ruha, the Harper Arilyn Moonblade, and the drow Liriel Baenre. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that amusing romp, *The Mage in the Iron Mask.*

I've also seen products that made these old eyes brighten in interest – and, betimes, in anger! That rogue Volo published first his guide to the Dalelands and then had the unabashed gall to publish, despite our agreement, his dangerously accurate *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical!* Essential work of magical lore it may be, but we don't want just every mortal on two worlds knowing all this about magic! We'll be contemplating some fitting fate for Master Volo in the near future.

Ahem. Now, where was I? Ah, yes, the game products that bring Faerûn to life. Just as essential as Volo's little tell-all-the-secrets tome is *Faiths & Avatars,* a comprehensive, guide to the major deities of the Realms, and their priesthoods. Even I was impressed with this one! There are also two boxed sets of things Faerûnian: *The North,* and *Netheril: Empire of Magic.* This launch of the ARCANE AGE™ line introduces Netheril – and there's also a trio of novels about that dawn empire.

Ye've probably guessed that the pens of the scribes of things Faerûnian are seldom idle, and the year ahead holds a castle-full of revealed secrets. I've told these avid gamers time and time again about the foolishness of laying bare things that powerful beings of the Realms would keep hidden ... but do they listen?

Of course not. So why should I, one of the (ahem) most mighty of all in Faerûn, refrain from letting ye know what they're up to? I see no good reason, so know ye that in the year ahead we'll look into the past in both game "fact" and fiction. The ARCANE AGE game line explores Cormanthyr, that old and proud elven kingdom, as it was way back when, and adventurers among ye will be able to "be there" at the Fall of Myth Drannor. (Why anyone would be so fool-headed as to *want* to be present in those dark days is beyond me.) That tireless scribe Ed of the Greenwood has had the temerity to prepare an opus dealing with my childhood once more: to whit, my time in the city that became Myth Drannor, and the events that culminated in the laying of the Mythal.

But one cannot live only in the past; I see other novels ahead, dealing with The Simbul, the land of Evermeet down the ages, the revival of gods some thought dead forever, and – but perhaps I should keep some secrets. Let it be known, then, only that the next anthology of Realms short stories, *Realms of the Arcane,* looks from the present at things important both now and in the past. (Clear enough? I thought not. Good.)

Know ye that gamers interested in the gods who would just not fit into *Faiths & Avatars* will see them all given the same exhaustive treatment in the forthcoming *Powers & Pantheons* sourcebook. Priests looking for still more spells with which to serve their deities need look no further than *Prayers from the Faithful,* which presents holy books of spells for the clergy in the same way that *Pages from the Mages* published details of wizards' grimoires.

That, of course, is very far from all. At long last gamers will learn more about the dastardly buffoons – er, villains – in the Cult of the Dragon. A separate tome will detail many other villains of the Realms in the same way that the heroes were described in their lorebook this year. There will be the usual smattering of adventures, and an essential Realmslore expansion, *The Lands of Intrigue:* the lands of Amn and Tethyr fully detailed and brought up to date. (Surprises are in store, involving a strong queen and a certain scribe who's not unknown to me.)

If ye've tasted the joys of Faerûn, ye know what I speak of. If ye've not, waste no more time in reading, but get out and hie ye into the very waiting heart of the Forgotten Realms!

Ed Greenwood, creator of the FORGOTTEN REALMS *setting, remains an active force by writing novels, game accessories, and articles for* POLYHEDRON® Newszine *and* DRAGON® Magazine.

LORELLE
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Gem of the North

The high palace of Alustriel

by Steven E. Schend

illustrated by Lorelle Ahlstrom

Silverymoon is the Gem of the North, and its crowning glory is its seat of government, the High Palace. Over the past year since the alliance of the rulers of these Northlands, the High Palace and the eastern city walls have been expanded to house the necessary functions of the new sovereignty. The High Palace is the only building on Faerûn that seamlessly incorporates the craft of dwarves, elves, humans, gnomes, and halflings.

History and general construction

The Year of Dawn Blades (765 DR) heralded the start of the High Mage's Keep, and it was completed sixteen months later during the late summer of the Year of the Burnt Spear (766 DR). For about 13 decades, the High Mage's Keep sat outside the eastern walls of the city, though an influx of refugees from falling Ascalhorn led to the expansion of both the keep and the city walls. Some of the refugees from Ascalhorn brought fell pursuers with them when they escaped from the baatezu-riddled city, and these creatures destroyed the High Mage's Keep in their onslaught. A new keep and three new towers were soon constructed by the Year of the Burning Tree (890 DR). The only remnant of the original structure was the White Tower. This expanded edifice became the High Mage's Palace, and remained unchanged, save for decor, inhabitants, and magical defenses through the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR).

With the change in Alustriel's status from High Mage of Silverymoon to ruler of a realm of northern city-states, the palace needed additional space for diplomats, new council chambers, and a separate throne room for Alustriel. Over ten draftsmen of Silverymoon and Mithril Hall designed the new palace and the new defenses of the city, while workers of all the nine settlements feverishly worked on the expansions. By the Feast of the Moon in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), the completed outer walls of the city and the new High Palace gleamed proudly beneath a light dusting of snow.

With the expansion of the palace, many things have moved around, and older areas now have newer purposes. Two outer defensive towers are now part of the palace, and have been converted to larger quarters for both the Knights of Silver (Alustriel's former city guards and the core of her realm's new army) and the High Guard (the guards assigned specifically to the High Palace). Although the High Tower remains the dwelling for the High Mage of Silverymoon, Alustriel's home is now in the northernmost tower rightly called Lady Hope's Tower. A number of other functions and offices have shifted about the palace, and only the Spellguard seems undisturbed in its White Tower offices and rooms.

Attendant buildings and wings

The High Mage's keep

Long held as the symbol of Silverymoon's government, the High Mage's Keep still serves as the center of authority over the Gem of the North. Its walls rise six stories, and its roof peaks are flanked by large, silver unicorns. Carved by dwarven craftsmen over 500 years ago, the exterior of the keep seems to be made of one solid block of white marble. The western and southern facades are covered in pale blue climbing ivy and deep azure roses indigenous only to this area; these are supported by stone roses of darker blue marble carved by elves centuries ago. Windows pierce the walls of the keep on all sides but the east, since this used to be the outer exposure of the palace. Many are lozenge-shaped slit windows with stained glass in them set high above the floors. The only direct accesses from the keep are the Great Terrace above the doors of the keep and scattered few square windows on the corners of each level.

The guard stations on the first four floors are merely standing posts for one or two guards, while those above and below are separate rooms with three or more guards. No guards are posted below the third dungeon level, as only a few can pass the wards therein.

The first floor contains the Great Hall, wherein anything from feasts and great dances to funerals and silent vigils can happen. There are no doors to the Great Hall, only a wide entrance broken by two slim marble pillars. The ceiling vaults above the second story, past the balcony overlooking the hall. Also on the first floor are offices for Silverymoon officials and clerks, the kitchens, the pantries, and the lesser dining hall.

The second floor holds the two spell-guarded meeting rooms for those who cannot air their concerns in open court. A secret room within the walls allows hidden Harpers or Spellguard to eavesdrop as backup protection to the High Mage. Wards within these rooms negate magical items of less than artifact status, as well as all spells of greater than 1st level, unless cast by someone with a ward token. The primary balcony is open to all who wish to see the activities in the Great Hall. A permanent *feather fall* magic below the balcony allows daring guests to leap off, only to dance lightly on air as they float down to the floor of the Hall. Also on this floor are a lesser library and a number of stations and quarters for the butlers and the footmen of the keep.

The third floor is dominated by the Throne Room. As in the Great Hall, the ceiling rises above the next floor over the surveying balcony. Centered on the far wall of the room is the Silver Throne, the actual seat of the governing High Mage since the election of Ecamane Truesilver in the Year of the Silver Sun (637 DR). When the High Mage is seated on the magic-endowed Silver Throne and has the *Staff of Silverymoon* in hand, no magic short of a *wish* or Mystra's direct intervention can affect him. Another special magic of the Throne Room is its floor. A single word from the High Mage can form a magically silenced hemispherical *forcecage*

around a target area of up to 15'-radius. All effects of the cage are similar to the *silence 15' radius* spell, though the *silence* affects only the caged target's voice, not its hearing. The only other chambers on the third floor are offices for visiting dignitaries and the Councillors' Assembly. The Assembly is a long chamber opposite the Throne Room. It contains a long meeting table, nine high lozenge windows set with blue crystal and sapphires; its tall doors lead out onto the Great Terrace. The voice of anyone who stands atop the mosaic sun on the Grand Terrace is projected to be heard at a normal volume by anyone within 60 yards of the palace walls. Only two staircases continue into the keep.

The fourth level has only one major room, Alustriel's Gallery. The much-loved Lady Hope of Silverymoon receives many gifts from high- and low-born alike. No matter the gift, it spends at least a month on display within the gallery for all to see. Afterward, the items are disbursed throughout the palace where they best fit the decor (or they go below into common storage or in the High Mages' sanctums). Some items are so popular that they never leave the gallery. One such is a solid mithril statue of Alustriel so well-crafted by the dwarves of Mithril Hall that it seems as if the Lady were turned to this most precious metal. The rest of the floor serves as office space for the many Silverymoon officials, clerks, and dignitaries.

The fifth floor has quarters for visitors, wardrobe rooms for guests to change into courtly garb, and the baths. The baths consist of two rooms given over to sunken tubs of marble, respectively cooled or heated by magic. While rainwater is collected from the roof and funneled to a cellar cistern, the bath water is *teleported* twice a day into the middens outside the city, and more water is magically drawn from the cistern to the tubs.

The top floor contains two three-room suites for special guests of the High Mage. The rest of the floor is dominated by many servants' rooms and a large parlor. The middle of the eastern suite of guest rooms contains a *gate* from the Silverymoon Embassy in Piergeiron's Palace at Waterdeep. The *gate* is centered on the eye of a mosaic unicorn set in the floor.

The first four dungeon levels beneath the keep are all that are known to the commoners and most guards of the keep. The first contains the cellar cistern, pantries, winter granaries, and furniture storage (furnishings from the Great Hall are moved up for feasts but back down for balls and dances). The second level contains a well-stocked and guarded armory of the High Guard (which contains many magical weapons), a wine cellar vast enough to sponsor a feast a day for a year (including the last seven bottles of Cormanthyran Elverquisst wine decanted a year before the fall of Myth Drannor), and a historical library, which contains the transcripts of all city court proceedings, the writings of the High Mages from High Mage Catseye on down, and other rare texts The third level is nothing more than a prison, with 15 common cells and three cells designed around a dead magic zone for imprisoning mages.

The lone staircase descends from the third level and ends at a mithril gate whose bars appear as unicorns' horn. There is no lock on this decoratively wrought portal, as the gate into the Crypt of the High Mages can be opened only by a touch from Alustriel's queenmantle or that of the *Staff of Silverymoon*. Through the gate, one can see the seven biers and seven statues of the dead High Mages of Silverymoon. Without a special ward token, anyone setting foot within the crypt is struck by an electrical charge for 8d6 hp damage per round (no save) until the intruder leaves the room. Most know of this room and believe it to be the final level of the palace.

Secret stairs leading below are found by touching the left hand of High Mage Orjalun's funerary statue with the aforementioned tokens. His empty bier slides to one side, revealing a stair to the levels below. The stronger magics of the lower wards generally kill those not protected by ward tokens, which is why only a handful of beings know of the lower catacombs of the keep.

The fifth and most of the lower levels have an intensified version of the ward encountered at the Crypt. These wards inflict 4d6 hp electrical damage (no save) and force a System Shock roll to avoid death every round a creature does not stay in contact with the ward token. After the fifth level, each of the dungeon levels vary in size, though most become smaller.

The fifth level below is a blind; it appears as a natural cavern with no exit and extends beneath the entire palace complex, with side caverns wandering far before ending abruptly. To the vision of a token-bearer, one of the stalagmites in the main cavern sparkles with magic, revealing the illusion-cloaked stairs beneath. The easternmost cavern contains a permanent one-way *gate* to a long-abandoned elven city in the forest of Cormanthyr. A side cavern that meanders over a twisting three-mile-long path leads west to a wall of crystal. Through the wall can be seen the side or bottom of the River Rauvin, about a half-mile west of Silverymoon. The crystal can, with a successful Strength check, be pierced, though it flows around the intrusion like a liquid and maintains its seal against river water. A well-marked path to a northern cavern leads to a one-way *gate* to Turnstone Pass. Small units of knights have used this to gain information on orcish troops and other dangers to Silverymoon.

The sixth level is little more than a hallway to the next set of descending stairs, and the archways along its length lead into rooms stacked floor-to-ceiling with bags of of gold, silver, bronze, mithril, and other precious coins. These come from all manner of countries, worlds, and times and include rare Netherese trade bars, Raurinese metallic yet animated "money-birds," and the liquid coins of lost Xauthar'll. The last room on this level contains thousands of gems in raw and polished forms, many in shapes and sizes unheard of in the modern Realms.

The seventh and eighth levels contain fresh water wells, sumptuous pantries, elegant rooms to compete with those above ground, and a number of studies and libraries. The decorations make it obvious that these two levels are among the earliest constructed safeholds for the Heralds and Harpers, constructed long before the rift that split the two groups. *Gates* are still active to this place from Suzail (Vangerdahast's tower), Waterdeep (Blackstaff Tower, Castle Waterdeep), Elminster's tower in Shadowdale, Baldur's Gate (Tor Vynthim), and the scattered locales of the Heralds' Holdfast west of Silverymoon, Heralds' Hall beneath the Troll Mountains, and Honorguard House on Cape Velen in Tethyr. These *gates* work only for someone bearing a Harper pin or Herald's badge who knows the command word to open the *gate*. All within these walls heal at twice the normal rate, and all healing spells work at maximum efficiency.

No mortals other than Alustriel and the High Mage Taern can descend beyond to the ninth and lower hidden

levels of the High Mages' Keep. Spells set during the indoctrination of a High Mage set certain magical marks upon him, and these magical markers allow him to see the illusion-cloaked stairwell hidden behind a sliding secret door in one of the Heralds' libraries. The wards and protections set below recognize only a High Mage, regardless of any ward-tokens or blood relations, allowing him to walk the halls unimpeded. All others are instantly *disintegrated* upon descending below the eighth level.

The ninth level is the Sanctum, where rests the greatest collection of esoteric and magical knowledge in the Realms (surpassing by sheer volume Elminster's and Khelben's libraries). Here lie the private magical libraries of all the previous High Mages save Shaloss Ethenfrost, who never knew of their existence. As some of the High Mages never made a separate library due to short tenures, there are only four major chambers on this level. High Mage Ederan "Catseye" Nharimlur's library was the first, and it was the only one for over a century after the castle's founding. Many of the works in his library (placed there by his daughter and successive High Mages) are works describing Cormanthyr, Myth Drannor, and Ascalhorn and Earleann at their respective heights. High Mage Nunivytt Threskaal was the next sanctum builder, and his library is entered on its third balcony level, its shelves running for three sublevels with a comfortable study at the lowest floor, 30' below. The honored High Mage Orjalun built a small, cozy study with heavy carpets over the stone, overstuffed chairs, and a cheery, everburning fireplace; the library itself is a collection of philosophies from a number of times and races, including the only full set of the six-volume *Treatise of Wiivalax the Thinker*, a Netherese Absolutist whose theories are amusing today but lend a unique perspective to that fallen realms' ideologies. The final sanctum is Alustriel's own. It is modestly lined with bookshelves and a couch surrounded by floating lights; Alustriel's spectral sister Sylune has access to this library (but not beyond its portal) by virtue of her unique undead status and a small flagstone near the center of the room.

The tenth level looks like the sixth, with the long hallways with ten open archways leading to ten rooms. Each room is a combination of a laboratory, workshop, museum, and store room containing (respectively) potions, scrolls, wands, rods and staves, amulets and necklaces, containers and mirrors, cloaks and robes and other magical clothing, armor and shields, swords, and other magical weapons. All of the archways are warded.

Aside from the Blackstaff's collection in Waterdeep, the eleventh level (known as the High Mage's Vault) contains the greatest assembly of artifacts in the North. In fact, it holds more rare artifacts from Ascalhorn and Myth Drannor than Khelben's hoard. The entire level is one large stone chamber unadorned with any decoration other than the stone pillars engraved with the names of the artifacts which rest upon them. Among them are such priceless artifacts as the silver Trident of V'Rannal, the dragontooth cup known as the Flagon of Dorathmar, and the elven saddle and bridle called Pegasi's Flight.

The final level is a smooth rock cavern with a small spring pool at its center. High Mage Taern has yet to make a pilgrimage to this chamber, but Alustriel has used it many times in the past century as a scrying pool to communicate with her city's four goddesses: Eldath, Lurue, Mielikki, and Mystra. The goddesses willing, this pool also serves as a *gate* from Silverymoon to the home plane of the goddess to whom Alustriel speaks. Only the High Mages have ever heard of this chamber, and no rumor ever speaks of it.

The Lady's Annex

This new castle, while roughly the same size as the High Mage's Keep, has only five levels. As it was not created as an externally exposed building, there are far more windows and balconies on the Lady's Annex. It is built directly north of the keep, and it partially connects to the Spell Tower and the keep by short walls.

The Lady's Annex shares only a silver-shingled roof in common with the older keep. It was constructed from new stone, a bluer marble that is a pleasing contrast to the white of the keep. The unicorn merlons along the annex battlements are white, like those of the keep, though their manes, fetlocks, and hooves are of the bluer marble. The annex's designers chose four different motifs for carving on its facade: Now stone axes (for the dwarves), star roses (for the elves), unicorn heads (for both the patron goddesses Lurue & Mielikki), and tiny stars (for Mystra and Alustriel) appear intermittently along the walls for the new roses to entwine among.

New magics of Silverymoon

Alustriel's crest

This huge enamel, mithral, and silver brooch is worked in the shape of a unicorn's head similar to Mielikki's holy symbol. It has a strong mithral clasp and a recess hidden within the brooch holds a slim mithral chain, to allow its use as an amulet. Its face is delicately worked with fine craftsmanship to almost appear as a real unicorn with a silver mane and mithral eye and horn. Alustriel has not been seen without this badge (used either as a cloak clasp or amulet) since her indoctrination as the "queen" of the northern cities, when she rescinded her use of the *Staff of Silverymoon*. This brooch was made for her by the dwarven whitesmiths of Mithral Hall and two of her sisters, the Witch-Queen of Aglarond, and Laeral Silverhand Arunsun, the Lady Mage of Waterdeep.

Alustriel can summon the crest from anywhere within the Realms if it should become separated from her, and she can likewise *teleport without error* directly to its location. With a round's concentration, she can home in on the location of her crest or any of the Staves of Silverymoon, of which there are three (in Waterdeep, Silverymoon, and Moongleam Tower in Everlund).

The crest protects Alustriel with constant magical effects as well as a few activated at will by her. Unless stated otherwise, effects are as if the spells were cast by a 25th level mage:

- The crest constantly generates a field that renders Alustriel immune to normal missiles and those of up to +2 enchantments.
- The crest allows Alustriel to *feather fall, levitate*, or *fly* at will for up to 8 cumulative hours per day, though the crest's magic must rest for as much time as it was used in this manner before activating it again for such a purpose.
- The crest also acts as Alustriel's ward-token for all the various magical fields within Silverymoon and the High Palace, bypassing their many and varied effects to allow her access to her full powers and item use at all times.
- Activated up to three times per day, a hold monster spell can be cast as a pulse of light flashing from the unicorn's eye in a wave out to a 20' radius around Alustriel. The targets are allowed saving throws at a –4 penalty.
- Up to three times per day, Alustriel can activate the crest and create a *wall* spell (caster's choice of *stone, force, fire*, or *ice*), *passwall*, or *animate stone*.
- The most spectacular power of Alustriel's crest is activated automatically (unless consciously withheld) when she or the crest come into contact with sixth or higher level magics; this power can also be used once per day by the will of Alustriel. A special permanent variant of *The Simbul's spell trigger* activates, unleashing any three spells of 1st–6th level previously stored within the crest within the previous 24 hours. As usual with the spell, the wearer's spells are inflicted at the maximum possible effect (most often maximum damage), and any targets to be selected must be in sight range when the spells are activated and chosen by the will of the crest bearer. In times of peace, Alustriel only casts defensive spells into the crest for this effect, but if she ventures into a battlezone, she will prepare the crest with potent spells such as *magic missile, chain lightning*, and *forcecage*.

The *Queenmantle*

This new magic, while technically an enhanced version of Alustriel's *improved mantle*, is not so much a spell that others can learn but one that is uniquely tempered and accessed solely for Alustriel's use. Of the other notables of the Realms, only Sylune of Shadowdale knows the secrets of her sister's *queenmantle*. As far as its level of magic, the *queenmantle* is definitely a complex, long-term ninth level spell, and it is a working personally developed by Alustriel from her research on Netherese mantles.

The *queenmantle* manifests around Alustriel as a field of shimmering, winking, sparkling lights that hover or glide around her skin and clothes. The field is barely noticeable in bright light, but apparent in moonlight or more poorly lit

conditions. Alustriel can alter the color of the sparkles at will, and she most often sets the magic to accentuate and compliment the colors of her garb, most often a gown and cloak of blue or white.

The *queenmantle* sparkles coalesce around her brow and wrists, the major concentration points for the spell's magic. The spell's primary function, as far as Alustriel's subjects are concerned, is to cloak their leader in a field of magic that shows her to be a great and powerful leader. Thus, each person who views the *queenmantle* around Alustriel sees a slightly different pattern of magical energy. Humans tend to see it as a field of light motes that start at her brow, swirling about to form a heavenly tiara of starry motes which arc around her head to peak at seven points. From there, the sparkles spiral down her arms to create delicate bracers of energy at her wrists. Most other races see a similar effect, particularly of the foci at the head and wrists, but their perceptions on how a leader should appear are reflected by the *queenmantle*. Elves perceive the magical field as a climbing ivy of magical translucent green energy with its roots at her heart, its leaves winding around her arms to lace around her fingers and forming a crown of leaves and mistletoe berries at her brow. Dwarves and gnomes, on the other hand, see the *queenmantle* as an red bolt or line – we would call it a laser – of magical energy that arcs about Alustriel, forming a constantly regenerating pattern of a seven-pointed crown's outline around her brow and the contours of bracers surrounding her full forearms.

The brightness of the *queenmantle* can be varied slightly, but only to sharpen the regal details viewed rather than produce a flash of illumination. In general, the *queenmantle*'s sparkles collectively generate light equal to a small candle spread around Alustriel, but they can be muted to a single mote of dim light that hovers at the crown of her head while she sleeps; no matter how bright or dim the *queenmantle*, its full effects remain in place.

The *queenmantle*'s powers are many and varied, most of which are constant effects while others activate at Alustriel's bidding:

❖ The *queenmantle* negates all poisons of any sort that come into the field's range (whether swallowed, contacted, or injected). If the *queenmantle* is shared at the time poison is administered, it acts as a neutralize poison spell, but cannot negate the poison if it takes effect before the target is within the *queenmantle*.

❖ The *queenmantle* wards off all contact, effect, or damage from nonmagical physical weapons and those of less than +3 enchantment.

❖ The *queenmantle* provides a basic +3 bonus to all saving throws.

❖ The *queenmantle* protects the wearer from all total effects of any 3rd- or lesser-level spell. Thus, a fireball could explode around Alustriel and harm neither her nor any items or clothing. Despite this field vs. magic, any spells or effects may exit the *queenmantle* at the will of the wearer.

❖ The *queenmantle* can be shared by contact with and at the bidding of Alustriel. The person must be able to be touched. Then Alustriel can embrace one person the *queenmantle*. This reduces its effects so the field is only proof versus spells of 2nd level or less, weapons of +2 enchantment or less, and the saving throw bonus is reduced to +2; all other effects remain at their stated norms.

❖ If the *queenmantle* comes into contact with another mantle spell of any kind, the sparkles arc and swirl for a round, paralyzing Alustriel and the other mantle bearer for one round and inflicting3d10 points of damage to the bearer of the lesser mantle (saving throw vs. magic for half damage; Alustriel only suffers half or quarter damage from the same effect). While the opposing mantle collapses after such contact, the *queenmantle* is maintained but at an immediate cost of 1d20 × 10,000 gp worth of diamond and ruby components (see below).

Within the High Mages' Crypt beneath the keep, there are blank areas set aside for at least five more future High Mages, though no biers are carved or prepared in the areas. There is a secret recess beneath the floor and across the Crypt, directly opposite the bier and funerary statue of High Mage Tanalanthara "She-Wolf" Mytersaal. Within this 3' × 5' × 8' recess (over which Alustriel's bier may lie) is Mystra's symbol created in a carefully collected and placed pattern of gems. The seven stars of the goddess are represented by 63 diamonds of no less than 5,000 gp worth each (9 diamonds per star). The rivulets of red tears are made of a mass of over two hundred 2,000 gp (or greater) worth rubies. This pattern is set with the major casting of the *queenmantle* spell, and it provides the power and components for the spell's continuous functioning. While the spell is active, the gems within the pattern are consumed to dust, and must be replaced or the spell will falter if more than half the gems are consumed. In all, the *queenmantle* spell costs roughly 1,000 gp worth of gems per day, and the gems must be replenished to complete the pattern at least once a year. Only Alustriel knows of this hidden room beneath the Crypt, and it is only reachable by a gate which is keyed only to her use and is found in her sanctum.

Alustriel's activation of the spell was quite public, at her "coronation." She wore a slim gown of midnight blue with a multitude of inlaid diamonds, making her appear as if clad by the night sky; after the collected lords of the nine cities swore fealty to her and formed the Alliance of Silverymoon, the diamonds from her gown began to swirl off her gown and around her, forming the *queenmantle*

The first floor of the Lady's Annex is accessible to the public, and the bulk of it is simply a gallery representing the best ideals and realities of Silverymoon's allied cities. Curio cabinets along the walls reveal each settlement's best products, from wood or stone carvings to mithril metalwork. The floor is dominated by a small scale model of the realm carved out of the flagstones, the delicate and precise stonework carefully painting terrain details from Mithril Hall to ruined Ascore and the desert's edge. Statues of each of the nine current city leaders are carved from granite and emblazoned with precious metals and gems, their placement marking the locations of their nine towns and cities. The rest of the main floor and sole cellar level contain servants' quarters, kitchens, pantries, and storage.

The second floor is actually two floors high, providing vaulting ceilings for its two major rooms: the Silver Hall and the Peers' Hall. The Silver Hall occupies two-thirds of the level and acts as both Alustriel's throne room and the grandhall and ballroom of the Lady's Annex; it contains the same magical defenses as the Throne Room in the High Mage's Keep. While the Silver Hall serves the bulk of public concerns, the Peers' Hall is the meeting room and upper-level balcony library for Alustriel's Council of Twelve Peers. Nine of the members are the leaders of Citadel Adbar, Citadel Felbar, Mithril Hall, Deadsnows, Everlund, Jalanthar, Quaervarr, Sundabar, and Silverymoon itself. The remaining three members are the Spellguard Major, the Shining Guard, and Old Night, the senior Herald from the Heralds' Holdfast. The Peer's chairs around an elaborate table contain special gates linked to their thrones or seats of power at their homes; when summoned by Alustriel, they activate a word of power which opens the *gate* and transports them directly to Silverymoon and this council chamber.

The third through fifth floors each contain four suites of rooms and ambassadorial chambers for each ruler among the Twelve Peers and their attendant staffs when in Silverymoon. As the Shining Guard, the High Mage, the Spellguard Major, and the Herald Old Night all have other quarters and offices in Silverymoon, four suites remain empty and are used for guest quarters for dignitaries like those in the High Mage's Keep.

The towers

The seven towers of the High Palace are for the primary use of the palace, city, and realm guards, whether Spellguard, High Guard, or the burgeoning army of Alustriel's realm. All the towers are open-topped battlements with the rampant Unicorns of Silverymoon lining the walls' edges. External defenses for these towers are identical to those on the walls (see below).

The smallest of the towers are the two flanking the main gate to the palace, the Moon Tower and White Tower; neither of these towers connects directly to the palace buildings. The Spell Tower, Lady Hope's Tower, and the High Tower have direct access to the High Mage's Keep and the Lady's Annex via the ramparts atop the walls and the internal corridor within the walls. The Citadel and the Sentinel are the largest towers (seven levels), and their bulk identifies them as the former external city wall towers they once were.

The Citadel: The northeastern tower of the High Palace acts as the offices, garrisons, and primary armory for the Knights in Silver. The Shining Guard and the Knights' major commanders keep offices and quarters in the third and fifth levels, while the major armory comprises the lowest two levels and will expand into a dungeon level yet under construction.

The Guild Tower: This tower, once known as the Spell Tower and shared by the High Guard and the Spellguard, is now the site of a number of the city's

more commonly used offices. The staff of the Lady's University of Silverymoon are busy with entrants from many realms, and both Taern and Alustriel make attempts to visit and help greet or screen applicants. The caravan trade and harbor-mastering of Silverymoon are managed in offices here as well.

The High Tower: This southern tower, with its direct connection to the keep, has been the primary dwelling of the High Mage for centuries, and continues in that capacity today. Its five levels include personal quarters, a library, a laboratory, and two levels for apprentices and their communal laboratory and study. Formerly called Alustriel's Tower during her past century of rule, it is now the tower of the new High Mage, Taern "Thunderspell" Hornblade.

Lady Hope's Tower: This is the newest tower, built exclusively for Alustriel. Its structure is almost identical to the High Tower, though Alustriel has moved her private library from the tower down into her sanctum below the keep, and the fifth level of the tower is now her bath chamber. Beneath some cunningly concealed trapdoors and passages is a deep shaft beneath the tower. While it has a *feather fall* effect in place to allow peaceful descent, it is also subject to the wards that permeate the fifth and lower dungeons of the keep (System Shock each round or death); the shaft allows only Alustriel or the High Mage to reach a tunnel to the sixth dungeon level, and ends at a secret door that is keyed to open only with a touch of Alustriel's *queenmantle* or the *Staff of Silverymoon*. The tunnel door opens into the back of the chamber that holds copper and silver treasures.

The Moon Tower: This tower rises immediately north of the palace gates. It used to be the primary garrison for the High Guard, the palace's independent guards. Now, it acts as a shared minor garrison for the Knights of Silver and the High Guard, whose primary offices are in the eastern towers of the palace.

The Sentinel: This massive and southernmost tower of the palace is for the High Guard's palace offices, main garrisons, smithy, and armory. With the additional room of this larger tower, the High Guard has adapted the second level of the tower for prison cells and uses them cells before those in the bowels of the High Mage's Keep for expediency's sake. Unlike the other towers, which have only one exit into the palace courtyard, the Sentinel has an exit leading outside the palace walls for quick action against forces along the walls; the door is magically reinforced and just as solid as the stone walls around it.

The White Tower: This tower, which lies south of the gate, is the only remnant of the original High Mage's Keep. Its upkeep makes it impossible for first-time viewers to distinguish its age over the newer works. As it has since the group's inception, this remains the central headquarters for the Spellguard, Alustriel's elite magical defenders. The High Mage once commanded the Spellguard but named as his successor Jorus Azuremantle (LG hem W12), his restrained, self-assured half-elven nephew, when he rose to the post of the city's ruler.

The walls of the High Palace

While often overlooked as parts of the palace, the walls between the towers and buildings are among the most important of defenses. At the lowest levels (first 25'), all the walls (with few exceptions) are solid stone and earthwork. At the third level of each of the towers, the walls between each of them are pierced by arrow slits, cauldron oubliettes (for pouring out boiling oil, etc.), and select spots for spellcasters during a siege. It is possible to reach any location within the High Palace's nine structures on the third level, given the need, a key, and a ward token.

All of the walls are also riddled with one or more sub-levels of passageways, internal traffic areas, well-hidden holding cells, armories and guard posts, and not a few secret passages known only to the High Mages and confidants (some of which allow access to and from the High Palace without confronting guards or gates); many of these are reached from the third level accessways, but only a few provide direct links to battlements or the courtyard. Unless noted otherwise, the walls are four levels high with upper battlements considered as an open fifth level. The doors leading to and from the battlements are warded and should be considered wizard-locked doors unless a person has their particular ward tokens (usually given from one group of guards to another upon changing shifts).

The eastern wall, as a former outer city defense, is larger and thicker than the others. Six levels high with its open parapet as the unofficial seventh level, this wall is obviously part of the older, outer fortifications. The third level accessways and siege areas (arrow slits, etc.) are repeated at the sixth level, with a number of areas reachable from the battlements through trapdoors; these trapdoors are warded like the outer doors of the towers, and can be further locked from their underside, preventing major breaches in security while allowing easy resupplying of defenders up top.

The main gate leading to and from the High Palace is a barbican with a double portcullis and an inner gate of two solid steel-reinforced wooden doors leading into the inner courtyard. Between the portcullis are murder holes on either side of the access and an oubliette above for boiling or flaming oil, though such has never been needed against any intruders since the Year of the Black Horde. Either metal portcullis is enspelled against normal and magical fire, electrical, and cold damage. There are always 9–11 guards on duty at the gate: three guards above the gate, two within the murder holes, a pair of guards outside the gate and within the inner courtyard, and a Spellguard and a junior officer of the High Guard are often posted within the oubliette above the inner gate (though they can be found in any of the establishing postings). Unless there is a long official processional leading to the palace, only one portcullis is raised at any one time, and the guards tend to limit the groups of entrants to eight or less at any one time; they are allowed beyond the first portcullis, which is lowered behind them as the inner portcullis and doors are opened.

The walls linking the Lady's Annex to the western towers and the High Mage's Keep have one final difference to the outer walls. These interior walls are less important for the palace's defenses, and are manned by far fewer High Guards or Spellgaurds. In addition, they have arched gates piercing the walls at their centers; while the gates are constantly manned by two guards each, they are only shut and locked at night or in the event of an attack. These gates through the inner walls allow movement of troops, supplies, and other resources between the inner courtyard and the outer bailey, with its training grounds on the north and private gardens south of the keep.

Finally, there is a persistent rumor among the folk of Silverymoon and the North that the unicorns on the palace battlements are far more than decoration or protection. In truth, at least one (and mayhaps more) of the stone unicorns is a stone golem! Its attacks are similar in form as a unicorn, but its defenses and damage are equivalent to

a standard stone golem. When a special alarm is sounded by the High Mage or the Spellguard commander, the stone unicorn teleports to the exact point where the alarm is sounded anywhere within the city. Rumors talk of a special power of the Staff of Silverymoon that allows its wielder to animate any of the stone unicorns with a mere touch, to which both Alustriel and High Mage Taern smile enigmatically and change the topic.

Wards

The Gem of the North has nearly always been a city of high sorcery and culture, so much of Silverymoon is enveloped by magical wards. Of all the magical fields about the city, the strongest are around and within the High Palace. The major ward that surrounds the entire palace and grounds has a number of effects and safeguards, making it similar to a mythal. The wards' boundary is roughly 80 yards from the palace walls and arcs equally far above and around the towers as well (though few know how far beneath the surface it extends. All High Guard and Spellguard members carry tokens against some aspects of this ward.

❖ The alignment of any entrant into the High Palace is detected by magic that causes eye color to change according to alignment (evil=black; neutral=purple; good=blue), despite any protective magics against detection. Creatures of evil intent are always escorted (or, if known felons or trouble-makers, imprisoned) by a four-member High Guard contingent (and a Spellguard, if needed) upon entrance to the grounds, as the guards are trained to make eye contact.

❖ Dragons, drow, dopplegangers, illithids, lycanthropes, and undead creatures cannot even enter the palace or its grounds unless they have a ward token. The first ward is an effective magical barrier as solid as stone against their passage, but not against all their powers (missiles, breath weapons, etc.).

❖ A person inside the ward cannot cast spells above 2nd level without a ward token (carried by all Spellguard members in their arm bands). Unless the caster has a token, the ward also reduces the range and effect of all spells by half, and this affects any spells entering the ward from outside too.

❖ No *teleport* or *gate* spells can operate freely within the ward and the High Palace it protects. Any attempts to arrive within the palace are stopped by the ward, and an alarm summons a senior Spellguard to the front gate, where all interrupted teleporters arrive. If an established *gate* is used without prior authorization, the arrival is trapped in a *forcecage* at the gate site until released by the High Mage or Alustriel. Any new *gates* arriving within the High Palace are likewise interrupted, and their casters are deposited at the main gate.

❖ The ward also acts as a permanent *protection from normal missiles* spell on all missiles entering the ward from outside. This does not interfere with the missile-firing capabilities of the High Palace guards themselves.

A number of internal wards add further layers of defense within the palace itself. One ward prevents all magic use unless willed by the High Mage (by the granting of a ward token, often keyed only to that room); this ward is duplicated in the eight major rooms of both the High Mages' Keep and the Lady's Annex: the Great Hall, Throne Room, Councillors' Assembly, and Alustriel's Gallery (High Mage's Keep); Lurue's Hall, the State Hall, the Grand Ballroom, and the Peers' Council Chamber (Lady's Annex). This ward is also active throughout the Lady Hope's Tower and the High Tower, the personal quarters of Alustriel and High Mage Taern.

Others wards are noted under the individual building notes on the palace itself, whether they are building-wide wards or fields restricted to one or two rooms. All effects of these wards can be circumvented by ward tokens available from the Spellguard, though some wards have only two tokens, allowing very few to bypass their effects. In all, only Lady Alustriel and High Mage Taern can act without fear of ward interference, since they are the engineers and controllers of them all. Both the *Staff of Silverymoon* and *Alustriel's Crest* act as ward tokens for all the wards within and around the High Palace.

Ward rings and tokens

Ward tokens are usually small rune-carved stones or other easily-carried items that allow the bearer to pierce a ward that acts as a barrier or ignore one that has general field effects. While there are individual tokens for each of the individual wards (more than a dozen specific), a person cannot carry individual tokens for each ward. Some of the wards with multiple effects demand a specific token to circumvent each individual effect.

The High Mage and the Spellguard have, over time, created a number of magical rings that act as tokens for a number of wards or ward-effects. Doled out only for one guard shift at a time (unless under extenuating circumstances), these rings allow full use of either magical items or spells up to various levels (usually up through fourth, sixth, or eighth), despite the wards. However, these rings are usually keyed to work only against wards of particular floors or rooms. Amulets worn by senior Spellguards duplicate both rings' effects as major tokens but are likewise limited to particular places. Of course, alternate or specific ward effects can also have ward token, ring, or amulet nullifiers, but these are negated either by particular ward tokens or by the grace of the High Mage or Alustriel.

There are major ward rings and amulets granted to senior members of the High Palace's protectors. These mithril rings and amulets are passively linked to the *Staff of Silverymoon* and *Alustriel's Crest* at all times. With a round of concentration, the bearer of either artifact can pinpoint the location and identity of anyone bearing the mithril ward tokens, provided they are within a 10-mile radius. Likewise, the High Mage or Alustriel can further release said bearers from the effects of any other ward-effects while they remain within their specific areas; in other words, a sending to the High Mage during a battle in the Councillors' Assembly can allow a Spellguard with a mithril token ring to be granted immunity to all the room's specific and the palace's general wards, though the ring normally doesn't do such. Unknown to all but Alustriel and Taern, this power also works in reverse, allowing the High Mage to cancel the mithril token's effects.

Currently, only Spellguard Major Jorus Azuremantle and his two trusted Captains Tarthilmor Aerasume (CG hem F11/W12) and Kimika Oniclash (LN hf Trans11) have major amulets allowing full access to spells and items, while their four Lieutenants have rings allowing lesser item use or spells up to seventh level (two of each).

Steven Schend is a TSR staff designer working primarily in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *campaign setting.*

introduction by Harold Johnson

For the DRAGONLANCE® setting, 1996 was a year of discovery. The tangled skein of the past unravels to add new pages to the history of Krynn. And what delightful discoveries they are! One of the first tales of Good dragon versus Evil wyrm appeared in *The Dragons* by Douglas Niles. With the popular anthology, *Dragons at War,* the role that these mighty drakes play in fashioning the future throughout the ages is revealed.

The *Lost Histories* series of books continued to probe the historical roots of legends of the peoples and champions of Krynn. With Richard Knaak's, *Land of the Minotaurs,* Kaz, the minotaur companion of Huma, returned to save his own clan from the greatest foe all minotaurs face – their own arrogance. The dwarven scholar Dan Parkinson related a tale of the first and possibly only hero of the Aghar in *The Gully Dwarves.*

The *Warriors* series explored the exploits of many of the heroes and villains of the War of the Lance. Edo van Belkom's retelling of the legend of *Lord Soth* takes a look at the twisted trail Soth followed to embrace his destiny as the *Death Knight of Krynn. Knight of the Rose* continues Roland Green's saga of Sir Pirvan the Wayward, and Don Perrin revealed the fire that tempered the master smith *Theros Ironfeld.*

History was not the only thing told through these new novels. There were also tales of mystery with *Murder in Tarsis,* by John Maddox Roberts, and stories of strange alliances between former foes, during the destruction of the Chaos War with *The Doom Brigade,* by Margaret Weis and Don Perrin. Even with the conclusion of the Chaos War, the legends of Krynn and the War of the Lance continue to bring that epic age to life.

The original DRAGONLANCE Saga came to a shattering conclusion with *Dragons of Summer Flame.* This novel seemed to herald the end of Krynn, but it was only the beginning!

The Chaos War nearly destroyed the world, and in its wake priestly miracles fail, magic dies, and many heroes lie slain. Now nothing stands between the people of Krynn and the fury of the true children of the gods, the dragons. This was once their world, and they are determined to take it back!

But, in their passing the gods left a flickering hope. Mortals are not alone. If they can but master the age-old magic of their world and the power of their hearts, Krynn may yet survive.

A new age of wonder and heroics appeared with a special year-long series of fiction premiering in these pages. Then Jean Rabe introduced a new age of adventure for Krynn with *Dawning of a New Age,* the first book in a new epic series.

The DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE™ game also underwent an evolution with the new SAGA™ system, to keep up with the changes in the world. It is a game focused on interactive storytelling. This is a game for everyone, with flexible mechanics that focus the game on adventure, not rules.

With the release of the game supplement, *Heroes of Steel,* we look at the warriors of Krynn. Here are details on the Knights of Solamnia, of Takhisis, and the new Legionaires of Steel. In addition, this product begins the adaptation of the new novel series as gaming adventures that you can experience yourself.

The discovery of 1996 was *The Last Tower: The Legacy of Raistlin,* which looks at the last surviving Tower of High Sorcery and the dread test that transformed the archmage Raistlin.

What lies in the next year from the chroniclers of Krynn? It is a year of danger and revelations.

The *Lost Histories* series continues to unfold with the anthology *Dragons of Chaos,* a look at how the brutality of the Chaos War changed the dragons. *Tales of Uncle Trapspringer* offers a look at one legend of every kender's favorite relative.

The *Warriors* series heats up with the tale of *Vinas Solamnus,* the rebel knight who founded the legendary orders of the Knights of Solamnia. Next is a tale of the blackest wizard of Krynn as we unravel the fable of Fistandantilus. Then comes a continuation of the tale of Sir Pirvan and his band of wandering warriors as they try to follow in the footsteps of their lord and become knights of renown. In *Murder in the Tower of High Sorcery,* a forlorn young maid must find a way for a commoner to overcome the secrets of a mage. Then return to Wayreth to follow Raistlin as he undergoes the Test of High Sorcery in *The Soul Forge,* by Margaret Weis. The FIFTH AGE epic from Jean Rabe rises to a fevered pitch in *Day of the Tempest* and descends like a raptor to its rending conclusion with *Eve of the Maelstrom.*

The DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE game continues to develop references to heroes, from the freedom fighting rebel rogues of *Heroes of Defiance,* to the new sorcerous mages of *Heroes of Sorcery,* to the wonders of mystics in *Heroes of Hope.* This series reaches its conclusion with *Wings of Fury,* a dragon view of history and their role on shaping the future of the world.

For both book and game fan comes the *DRAGONLANCE Bestiary,* a complete guide to the monsters of Krynn, plus a look at the legends associated with these creatures. The year wraps up with *Citadel of Light: Goldmoon's Refuge,* an exploration of the mysteries of the mystic way and the new mythology of Krynn.

The world of DRAGONLANCE begins a new saga. With struggles against countless foes, the mystery of the vanished gods, and the discovery of the new power of the Heart, the adventure is just beginning!

Harold Johnson is responsible for Tasslehoff, kender, gully dwarves, and untold trouble since the creation of the World of Krynn. He is Creative Director for the DRAGONLANCE line.

BETWEEN THE AGES

A timeline of the dawn of the Age of Mortals

by Douglas Niles

illustrated by John Stanko

Ages of gods and dragons, of dwarves and elves and men have risen and fallen across the face of Krynn, and always the river of time runs on. Now, at the brink of the Fifth Age, the continent of Ansalon suffers some of the greatest ravages in a long, tumultuous history. The old gods and the long-practiced powers of magic are gone. So too is the scribe who has recorded the passage of history's first four ages. Astinus the Lorekeeper has closed his last volume, departing his great library and vanishing into the misty banks of his eternal river.

Yet still that river flows, and its many tales are recorded by historians old and new. The tomes of Nathal the Chronicler have documented many of the years since the Second Cataclysm. Elder historians tutored under Astinus, including Foryth Teel and the ever-loyal Bertrem, have also continued to make their contributions. Although they labor without the Lorekeeper's all-seeing guidance, they have combined to keep a credible record.

And, too, there are still bards who wear the ancient minstrels' time-honored mantles. Quivalin Soth of the elves, the dwarven balladeer Chisel Loremaster, and many more continue to sing the ballads of history. These tales are always skewed to the teller's point of view, of course, but all are structured around important kernels of truth. And a new bard, called the Herald, now travels Ansalon, singing songs of awe and darkness, but also promise and hope. He is a mysterious figure who claims to have no knowledge of his own past, but is possessed of a canny insight into the memories, the life stories of all the peoples of Krynn.

This is the continuing river as these storytellers travel it, and as the current continues to flow.

0 SC

Second Cataclysm and Chaos War

Convulsions wrack Ansalon and the surrounding oceans as Chaos, Father of all and of nothing, unleashes vengeful war against his children and all their creations. Frost and shadow wights, fire dragons, and daemon warriors ravage the continent, as oceans boil and the sun stands still in the sky. New islands, the Teeth of Chaos, rise from the northern sea where the rift of chaos had been torn into the world.

Ultimately, as the price of victory – or at least survival – all the gods retire from the world. The three moons of magic and the old stars of the constellations – including Takhisis and Paladine – are shattered and scattered across the sky; the Maelstrom in the Bloodsea finally grows placid. Most of the chaos monsters depart with their creator, though parts of the continent remain dark with their destructive presence.

A single, pale moon appears in the night, while a new red star gleams from the southern sky.

1 SC

The world awakens to new truths: magic spells and all powers drawn from the gods are mere memories. But already people are discovering other realities as well, realities that mark this as the Age of Mortals. People find strengths within each other, and within themselves.

In Solace, a tomb is raised to the heroes who defeated Chaos. At the Council of the Last Heroes, the opposing orders of knights agree to a grudging truce; much of the eastern portion of the continent is granted to the Knights of Takhisis.

In Palanthas, the tower of high sorcery and the contents of Astinus' great library vanish. Throughout Ansalon many dragons, both chromatics and metallics, emerge from hiding.

2 SC

Malystryx the Red, a dragon far huger than any living in Ansalon, flies from the eastern ocean to land and devastates the Misty Isle. Because of her immensity, a black dragon heralds her arrival as a return of Takhisis – until Malys kills him, and then lays waste to the island. A daemon warrior attempts to use her for his own ends. He, too, is slain, but not before he informs Malys of many rich lands to the west of her remote and ruined island.

Pleased by the slayings and the devastation, Malys flies west to the Dairly Plains. Like a force of nature she churns into Ansalon, leaving a bleak wasteland of the plains, then sweeping into Kendermore with the same horrific effects. The cheerful kender are stunned and shattered by the onslaught; those who survive flee into Balifor. A courageous female of Kendermore, Blister Nimblefingers, leads a party of ten of her countrymen to Ogrebond, seeking to carry word of the disaster to the Knights of Solamnia on Sancrist Isle. Blister alone survives the trek, and her mission is successful.

3 SC

Within months Balifor is also under attack. As refugees spread up and down the coast, tales of the great red dragon are carried far and wide. Several chromatic dragons fly from the Khalkist Mountains to challenge this monstrous intruder. Malystryx enjoys the killing of each, retaining the lesser dragons' skulls as trophies.

4 SC

As she slays more dragons, Malys discovers that she can use the might of her victims to create a totem. This is at first a monument to her own power, but soon becomes a means to exert virtually godlike power over her realm. She creates the Desolation, ravaging once-pastoral plains and forests, changing them into grotesque mountains, volcanic rifts, and fiery summits. Eventually the eastern shores of the Bay of Balifor come to a boil. A lofty mountain, broad and flat at its cloud-bound summit, rises in the center of the Desolation.

A great blue dragon, Khellendros, once called "Skie," begins to ravage the Northern Wastes. He, too, slays many dragons and raises a totem. Soon sandy desert sweeps outward from his lair, and the Blue Waste expands to the fringes of Palanthas.

In Neraka, the Knights of Takhisis form a stronghold, arranging an alliance with the many chromatic dragons living in the nearby Khalkists.

5 SC

Small, secretive bands of warriors gather in all of Ansalon's cities. They call themselves the Legion of Steel, and they share a passion for justice and loyalty. Searching for faith in the absence of gods, these men and women pledge to aid each other and the downtrodden in every way they can.

A green dragon, Beryllinthranox, falls upon Qualinesti. Beryl begins to hunt other dragons here and in the High Kharolis; these battles develop with little significant retaliation from the elves and humans of these realms.

6 SC

A mighty black dragon, Onysablet, claims the eastern coast of the New Sea. Swiftly slaying many lesser dragons, Sable vastly increases her own size and power. Soon the lands of her realm are mired in a trackless, boggy swamp extending for hundreds of miles.

Fearing slavery under the Dark Knights, many draconians flee northward from Neraka. In Teyr they form a stronghold that soon grows into a small realm.

8 SC

A despairing Goldmoon is granted a vision of new powers, healing magic that can be drawn from within a person of great spiritual strength. She becomes the high priestess of a new faith; and soon bands of pilgrims are drawn to her from across the world. She founds the Citadel of Light on the Isle of Schallsea.

A monstrous red dragon, Pyrothraxus, claims a realm in Mount Nevermind. Pyro and the gnomes commence a terrible war. Eventually he is maddened by his failure to eradicate the pesky natives.

9 SC

Malys, Sable, and Khellendros continue to hunt and kill lesser dragons. As each totem expands, so does the Great Dragon overlord's realm. Beryl has slain many dragons in the area of Qualinesti, though she has yet to create a totem.

On Sancrist, the Knights of Solamnia hold a council to mourn the passing of Lord Gunthar and to elect a Grand Master. He is Liam Erhling, and he proposes a new Measure for the new age: no longer is it enough to rely upon honor as the perfect goal of life. Instead, the knights will place their value and their trust in each other.

This is a lesson learned across the world with increasing frequency. In Northern Solamnia, a young woman named Mirta uses her new awareness to unite her tribe; on Sancrist Jarrad Borfson, an aspiring young warrior, sees that his true destiny is tilling the fields of his father's farm.

11 SC

The Silvanesti elves raise a magical shield around their realm. The shimmering wall proves impervious to humans and dragons, though a green dragon remains within the sylvan forest. As in an age long past, the elves in their ancient kingdom turn their backs on the rest of the world.

12 SC

A great white dragon, Gellidus, called Frost by men, invades Southern Ergoth. He slays much of the population, including numerous native dragons. Within months he has raised a totem on the island. Blizzards rage into being, and within weeks a massive glacier has formed over the northern reaches of that once-temperate island. Stormy seas and plunging icebergs rage around the coasts, and the approaches to the Bay of Darkness freeze, creating an icebound lake.

14 SC

Stenndunuus, a great blue dragon, rages onto the Plains of Dust with hurricane force. Humans and centaurs flee the onslaught of the wyrm they call Thunder. Small bands of the two peoples unite for mutual survival. Within a year, the two displaced peoples have formally pledged support and interdependency, uniting to form the nation of Duntollik.

Some men and women have begun to discover sources of magic, limited spell abilities that are drawn not from the vanished gods of magic, but from within the world. Word of this new sorcery spreads slowly, and, naturally, many of the old mages are skeptical – and envious.

A huge brass dragon, Iyesta, called Splendor, challenges Thunder. She distracts the blue from his attempt to build a totem, and the two mighty wyrms claim realms in the southern plains.

16 SC

A massive red dragon, Fenalysten, or Cinder, claims a mountainous realm in central Ansalon, and green Lorrinar, called Fume, arrives to settle in an adjacent forest. Along the coast of Nordmaar, a mighty black dragon named Mohrlex, or Pitch, claims the Great Moors. None of these dragons is able to create a totem, but each quickly becomes master of anything and everyone within its borders.

17 SC

Icewall Glacier is claimed by two monstrous white dragons, Frisindia and Cryonisis – called Freeze and Ice by men. The twin wyrms immediately seek and slay all lesser dragons within their reach, but they are unable to create even a single totem between them.

18 SC

Khellendros discovers a hideous power: He can fuse the body of a man with the spirit of a draconian. The resulting creature, a dragonspawn, is mightier

than either of its progenitors. Khellendros begins to create an army of spawn, jealously guarding the secret from the other overlords.

20 SC

In the east, the realm of Malys has grown into a vast Desolation, though she has permitted the survival of a few coastal cities. Khellendros is named the "Storm over Krynn," and his Blue Waste encroaches upon a vast swath of northern Solamnia. Sable and Frost (Gellidus) have now entrenched themselves within vast realms – of swampland and glacier, respectively.

A mysterious figure emerges from the Desolation. He displays hitherto unknown magical powers, and is called the Shadow Sorcerer.

25 SC

Beryl finally succeeds in creating a totem within the depths of her forest home, and immediately the woodlands of Qualinesti grow thick and tangled. She claims power over the Qualinesti; faced with the prospect of extermination, the elven speaker Gilthas capitulates.

28 SC

A few wizards have learned to tap into the arcane powers of Krynn enough to weave minor magics. Yet all of the old and traditional teachings, spellbooks, and components remain useless. The mage Palin Majere, together with the Master of the Tower of Wayreth and the Shadow Sorcerer, gather at Wayreth, the lone Tower of Sorcery still standing. The ever-mysterious Shadow Sorcerer helps the elder mages learn more about this new magic. They realize that their old spells are in fact obsolete – but that the energy within themselves, and the world, is a force capable of phenomenal power. This meeting is called the Last Conclave, and the three orders of the old robes are disbanded. The wizards vow to spread knowledge of this new power, while the Shadow Sorcerer disappears. Within a year, Palin has established a school of the new sorcery near Solace.

29 SC

Beryllinthranox, seeking to create a realm as vast as the other four overlords', sends green dragons against Thorbardin. While the verdant frontier expands swiftly under the influence of her landshaping power, a renegade band of dwarves led by the Daewar prophet Severus Stonehand decides to use the egg of a fire dragon as a weapon; the resulting explosion destroys the attacking dragons but also causes vast devastation to the dwarven realm.

Exiled, Severus leads a great column of dwarves toward the ancient clanhomes in the faraway Khalkists.

The Storm over Krynn has difficulty controlling the dragonspawn process. At least one spawn has retained the memories of its human portion; that creature, with the skills of a master assassin, sets about to destroy those who spread the blue overlord's power and influence.

30 SC

The dwarven trek takes more than a year and a half. When Severus and his refugees finally reach the corrupted dwarven realm of Zhakar, they quickly overrun the plague-ridden dwarven denizens. The prophet Stonehand uses his mystic powers to cure the mold-borne blight that has affected Zhakar for centuries. The newly-vibrant realm adopts the ancient name: Thoradin.

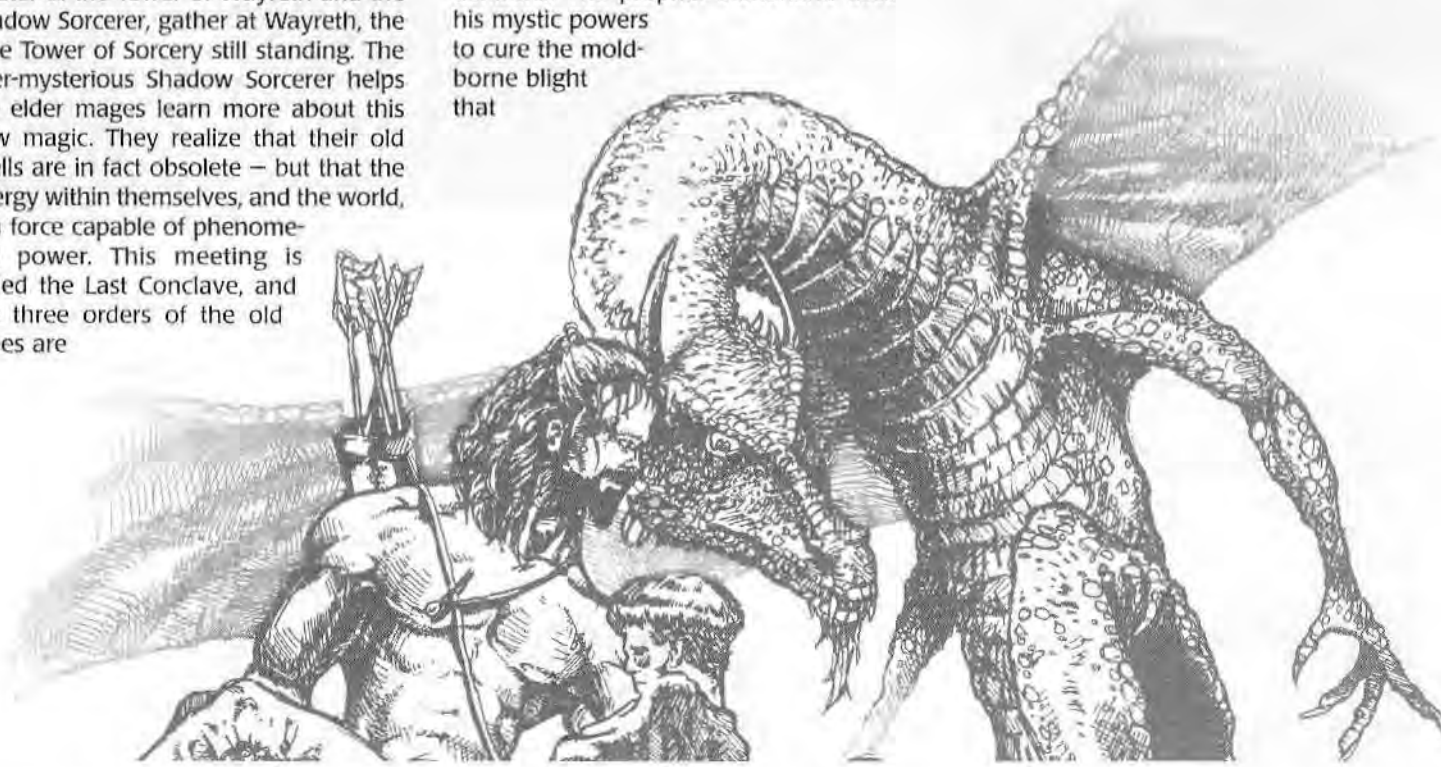
Content with the extent of her realm, and worried about the increasing power of the other overlords, Malystryx visits the other mighty wyrms and imposes an end to the Dragon Purge. The five overlords agree to occupy Ansalon between them, and to aid each other against the incursion of any additional great wyrms.

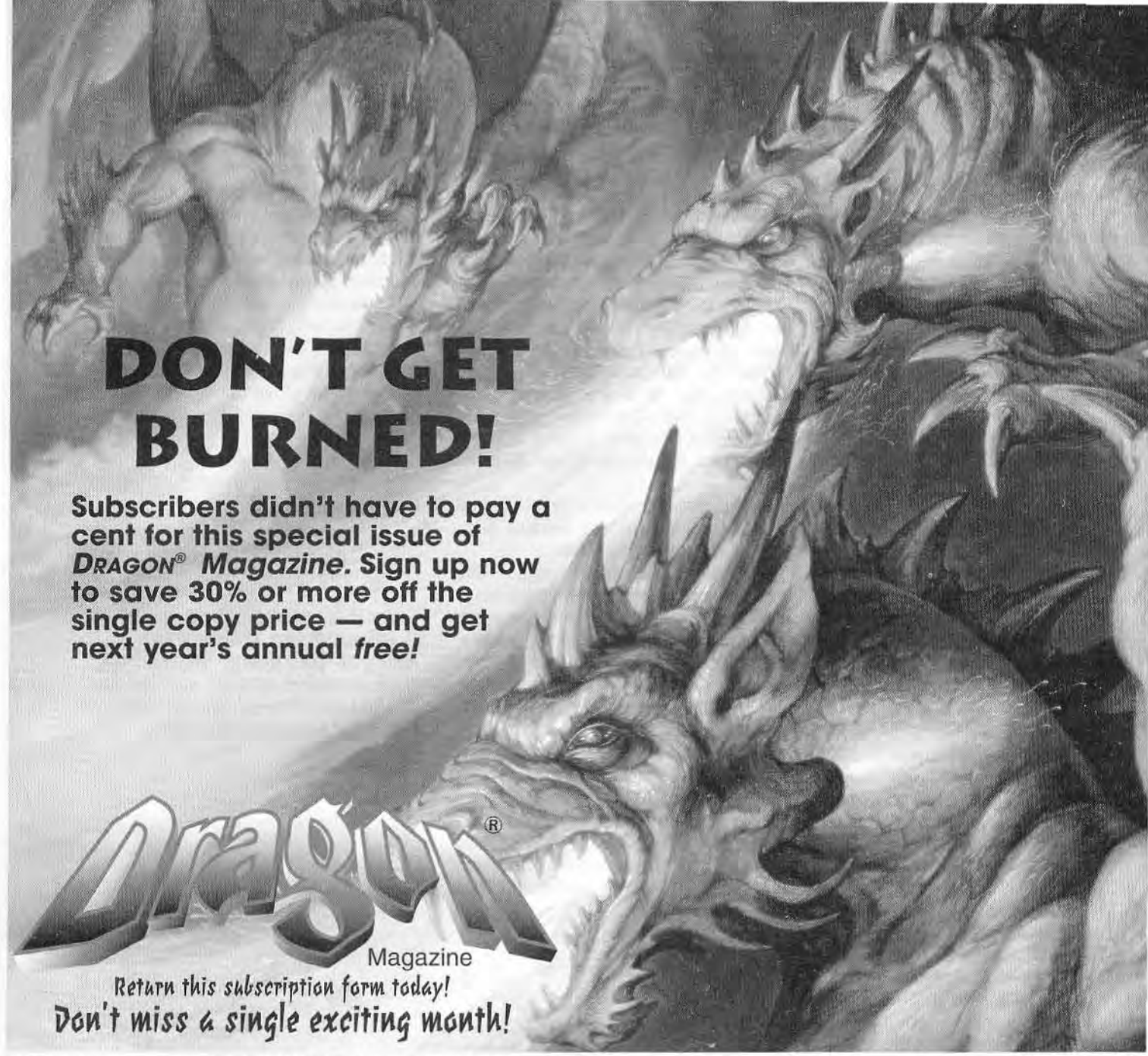
Commanding subject humans and other dragons, the overlords retire to their lairs – while everywhere under their talons the peoples and lesser dragons of Krynn strive for escape, and for freedom.

31 SC

The present day, and the start of the FIFTH AGE campaign.

Douglas Niles is a veteran of the DRAGONLANCE® saga and the AD&D® game. Among his many writing credits are novels, game accessories, modules, and rulebooks. His short story "Thunder and Ice" appeared in DRAGON® Magazine *issue #233.*





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Ravenloft® Campaign

introduction by William W. Connors

Like most fables of foreboding, terror, and death, the story of Ravenloft begins with a tale of love. Centuries ago, in the wake of a great war, a young nobleman named Sergei von Zarovich traveled to dwell with his brother Strahd in the grim Castle Ravenloft. In the village of Barovia, which stood in the shadow of Strahd's mighty fastness, Sergei met and became enamored of a beautiful young woman named Tatyana. The young couple made plans to be joined in wedded bliss, not knowing that bitter fate had decreed otherwise.

Throughout their courtship, Strahd had been envious of the bride his brother would claim. She was vibrant and beautiful, clever and charming; more than enough to make an aging warrior feel young again. But Tatyana felt nothing for Strahd. She saw him only as an old man who had spent his youth on the battlefield. He was dark and moribund, she was vital and splendid. What could possibly make her cast aside the handsome and loving Sergei for such a man?

Strahd's hunger consumed him. On the night of Tatyana and Sergei's wedding, he called upon powers dark and terrible to give him the youth that would deliver the woman he desired to him. He sealed his pact with death by brutally murdering his own brother.

In that instant, Strahd received not youth, but eternal life. He became a vampire, perhaps the most terrible of the foul undead. Tatyana spurned the creature who came to claim her, throwing herself from the towers of Castle Ravenloft to escape his vile kiss.

Strahd's sinister deeds did not go unnoticed. Somewhere in the Ethereal Plane, a consortium of beings known as the Dark Powers, saw what had happened. For reasons known only to them, they extended misty tendrils to envelope the dark vampire and the castle in which he dwelt. When these vapors receded from the valley of Barovia, Strahd and was stolen away to become the Lord of the first domain in what would evolve to become the Demiplane of Dread.

It has been nearly a decade and a half since Strahd's story was first told in 1983 (I6: *Ravenloft*). The success of that module created a demand for more adventures featuring the self-proclaimed "first vampyr." Eventually, in 1990, the continued interest in Strahd and the concept of Fantasy Horror prompted TSR to publish the award-winning *Realm of Terror* boxed set. For the first time, fans of the AD&D® game could fuse the elements of traditional fantasy with the monsters of gothic horror. Vampires, ghosts, werewolves, mummies – all ceased to be entries on a random encounter table as the Demiplane of Dread transformed them into full-fledged villains.

As the years passed by, Ravenloft fans explored the lairs of vampires (*House of Strahd*), the forgotten towers of liches (*From the Shadows*), and whole cities overwhelmed by werewolves (*Feast of Goblyns*). They met ancient ghosts (*Castles Forlorn*), tried to solve centuries-old mysteries in the tombs of mummies (*Roots of Evil*), and faced the dread rakshasas of the far east (*Web of Illusions*). They have even challenged diabolical fiends (*Oath of Evil*) and were forced to learn the secrets of the gypsy-like Vistani (*The Evil Eye*).

Recently, the heroes of Ravenloft have faced their greatest threat yet. They have been driven to the brink of madness and seen the death of the great vampire hunter Rudolph van Richten (*Bleak House*). As 1996 draws to a close, they will witness a terrible and dangerous plan by the lich lord Azalin, whose grim harvest will change the face of Ravenloft forever (*Death Unchained, Death Ascendant*). Indeed, the repercussions of this may leave many heroes transformed into vampires, zombies, ghouls, and other such creatures, trying desperately to regain their lives before the blackness of the grave consumes them utterly (*Requiem*).

But what of the future? In the wake of Azalin's villainous plan, TSR will release a new product tentatively titled *Domains of Dread*, which updates and expands the rules of the RAVENLOFT setting. Many things players have demanded for years will finally see print, including a RAVENLOFT® setting-specific character generation system; expanded rules for fear, horror, and madness checks; and a greatly enhanced chapter on the seductive nature of the dark powers.

What else do the Mists have in store? Before the end of the year, players will be treated to a baker's dozen of vampire stories (*Children of the Night: Vampires*). This will be the first in a series of such works, each focussing on a single type of monster and showing the great diversity of the supernatural world.

What 1997 holds is still unclear. How about a brief excursion to the world of Toril, where a mad king is about to step into the Mists, or a series of adventures that culminates in the exploration of the setting's greatest mystery, the Shadow Rift. All of these things are under consideration by the Kargat, as we call the RAVENLOFT design team, and there are even more ominous tidings in the stars after that.

Ever wonder what scares the Vistani?

William W. Connors has been with TSR since 1989 as both a game designer and roving cynic. He has been working on the RAVENLOFT line almost since the day he was hired and looks forward to doing so until the day he is fired.

Vampires A–Z

A dictionary of undead from around the world

by William W. Connors

illustrated by Mark Nelson

Most of the vampire lore reflected in modern role-playing games is drawn, more or less, from Bram Stoker's wonderful *Dracula.* To be sure, other authors, both Stoker's contemporaries and those more modern, have shown us variations, but these are fairly minor. The immortal Dracula would find much in common with the more modern Lestat de Lioncourt. In many role-playing games, even those like the RAVENLOFT® or *Masque of the Red Death* settings, which stress the great diversity of the undead, this same tradition lives on. There are, however, as many stories about the undead creatures as there are cultures to tell them.

Game statistics

No specific game statistics are included for the dark and deadly creatures that follow. With such information, this article would quickly become a full-length game accessory. Still, some guidelines for the use of these children of the night are in order.

In general, it is safe to assume that all of the creatures in this article share most of the common advantages of the undead. For instance, they are immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells, they can be turned by priests, and they are vulnerable to damage from holy water. Referees should probably assign the creature an additional ability or two and a new weakness just to keep the players on their toes.

In order to make it easier for a referee to incorporate these undead into his campaign, however, a parenthetical note is included with each entry. This indicates the AD&D® game creature that this is particular type of vampire is most like. Thus, the entry Adze (vampire) indicates that referees simply assume that the adze has the same Hit Dice, THAC0, number of attacks, and other statistics that a vampire does. All of the parenthetical entries are drawn from the AD&D *Monstrous Manual™ tome.*

It is important to note that this does not always mean that the adze has all of the special abilities associated with that creature. Dungeon Masters should base the special abilities of these creatures on the descriptions provided.

Aswang (ghast)

Tales of this female vampire are known in the Pacific rim and Philippines. The aswang is always very beautiful and appears to be a typical human by day. Indeed, it will even marry, raise children, and otherwise appear to lead a normal life. At night, however, the aswang follows flocks of evil night birds to the house of its victims. There, the vampire feeds mosquito-like with its long, hollow tongue. After it has drained the blood of a victim, it is bloated and appears pregnant. With the coming of the dawn, however, the aswang returns to its human form.

Baobhan-sith (doppleganger)

In Scotland, tales of this dreadful shape-changing vampire are told along with the accounts of the banshee. A baobhan-sith sleeps in her grave by day, emerging to feed upon the blood of young men at night. This foul terror can change shape at will, much as a doppleganger, and assumes a form that its victim finds pleasing or nonthreatening.

Civatateo (mummy)

These Mexican vampires date back to the days of the Aztecs and are believed to be the servants of the gods. Thus, they have the magical powers of a priest. All civatateo are noblewomen who died during childbirth and have now returned to earth. These creatures stalk travelers at crossroads and lurk in temples or churches. They are terrible to look upon, shriveled and as white as chalk. Often a death's head or other glyph is painted on their clothes or tattooed on their flesh.

Dubbelsauger (ghoul)

This is a German vampire with a most unusual origin and several interesting traits. The dubbelsauger is a child who was nursed after he had been weaned. When this person dies, he returns as a dubbelsauger. The dubbelsauger does not leave its coffin but begins to feed on its own flesh. As it does so, however, one of its relatives begins to waste away as if by some terrible disease.

Eretica (hag)

The stories of these creatures comes from Russia and are closely akin to hags and witches. An eretica is formed following the death of a blasphemer or religious heretic (from which the name is drawn). During the day, these creatures appear as nomadic old women who wander about dressed in tattered clothes and old rages. At night, they meet with others of their kind to conduct evil rituals and serve their fiend masters. Those who walk near their graves or look into the creature's eyes contract a withering disease.

Fravashi (succubus)

This Arabian vampire is an especially hedonistic and sensual creature. In addition to its ability to sap the strength and life from mortals, it is possessed of many mystical powers. The nature of this creature is apparent in the fact that its name is also the term for a kept harlot supposed to have mystical powers.

Gayal (wraith)

This phantasmal vampire is found in India and the far east. It is the spectral form of a wealthy man who died without a suitable heir (that is, a male child) or a proper burial. After death, he returns to drain the life from his surviving relatives. Lamps and milk are effective in keeping the gayal away, although the spirit can be laid to rest only with a proper burial or the discovery of an acceptable heir.

Hannya (wight)

Hannya are ghoul-like creatures who come to us from Japan. Although most hannya are female, there are occasional accounts of male creatures. Hannya are women (and men, presumably) of great beauty who made a deal with a fiend and were driven insane by the diabolical nature of their bargain. Hannya are feral, bestial things who drink blood and devour flesh, favoring that of children above all others.

Impundulu (zombie lord)

This African vampire is almost always found in the company of a female wizard or shaman. It appears to such a person as a handsome man and becomes both her lover and familiar. While the sorceress ages, the impundulu remains young forever. The impundulu goes out to torment the enemies of the wizard, generally devouring them sooner or later. If the creature does not feed frequently, it turns on its owner. So voracious is this creature, however, that it can wipe out whole villages. As a rule, the impundulu must feed every day.

When the master of an impundulu dies, she passes the creature on to her daughter. When no such heir exists, the monster becomes an ishologu, or masterless fiend. The appearance of an ishologu always heralds the onset of a terrible plague of murder and carnage.

Jigarkhor (wight)

This unusual Sind vampire is also a powerful sorceress. In addition to its vampiric and spell casting abilities, the jigarkhor is able to plunge its hand into the body of a sleeping person and draw out his liver. The organ is then swallowed by the beast, who escapes into the night. The attacked person is comatose for a day or two before dying. If the vampire can be found in that time, the organ can be cut from its body and returned to its owner (who must swallow it if he is to live). A jigarkhor can be slain by branding it with a hot iron on both sides of the head.

K'uei (skeleton)

The Chinese k'uei are undead remnants of those who simply led lives too lacking in goodness to earn themselves a place in the afterlife. They are skeletal in form, although their heads remain and their faces have been twisted with demonic ferocity. A curious trait of the k'uei is that they must travel in straight lines, making only 90° turns. Curving and twisting passages, therefore, can be excellent for keeping them out (or in).

Lemure (spectre)

These ancestral spirits, found in Roman mythology, are formed when someone is buried without a proper funeral. They return from the dead to haunt family gatherings and feasts, especially those with religious overtones. They spread disease and suffering to all who attend such festivals unless mystical wards and offerings are employed to keep them away and avoid their wrath. Only if the body is discovered and given a decent burial can the spirit be laid to rest.

Moroii (wight)

This Romanian creature is a living vampire, not an undead one (thus, a moroii could not be turned or affected by spells like *control undead*). These creatures are unable to close their eyes, so they never blink or sleep. Moroii always have bright red hair, beautiful blue eyes, and two hearts.

Nelapsi (vampire)

This is an incredibly deadly vampire spoken of in regions of the Czech Republic. This creature, which drinks the blood of living, haunts churches and temples. From the towers of such structures, he can instantly slay any creature that he can set his eyes upon (although a save vs. death magic might be allowed). Within the walls of the church, it can use this power against anyone who dares to enter its lair. It is not uncommon for a nelapsi to enter a village, enter its church, and then destroy the entire population with its deadly gaze.

Ohyn (goblin)

This tragic creature comes from the folklore of Poland. An ohyn is created following the birth of a child with teeth and a cowl. If the teeth are not extracted promptly, the child dies and rises from the dead as an ohyn. Following its return, the ohyn feasts on the flesh of its parents. Only when they are slain does it return to its grave and rest in peace.

Pelesit (mammal, small – mouse)

The pelesit is a fascinating creature from Malaysia that takes the form of a large cricket. It enters the home of a victim at night and invades his body. Over the course of the next fortnight, the pelesit drinks its victim's blood, causing him to sicken and finally die. As the victim dies, he grows mad and begins to rant endlessly.

If caught outside a body, the pelesit can be captured (only by a woman) and put in a bottle. It can survive in there so long as its captor pricks her finger and allows her blood to drip into the flask for the creature to feed upon. The bottle can be buried (destroying it) or used as a weapon against an enemy.

Qarlak (wight)

This is a newly documented strain of vampire that haunts game conventions in the midwestern United States. It has the distinction of being made up by me because I could find no references to vampires that started with "Q" and didn't want to change the name of this article to "Vampires: A to Z (except for Q)." The qarlak feeds on the blood of convention-goers but can be repulsed by soap and deodorant.

Ramanga (zombie)

This unique entry is drawn from the rituals and traditions of Madagascar. Although not strictly a vampire, this fascinating type of person deserves mention here. A ramanga is a social outcast who must live apart from his people until called for by the chief or shaman. Whenever a medical treatment was conducted on a noble, anything from having his nails clipped to the amputation of a limb, the ramanga was called in to remove the remnants of the procedure. This meant eating them.

Stregoni (vampire)

This Italian creature is unusual in that it is a good-aligned vampire. Also known as a kudlak, the stregoni hunts down and destroys evil undead creatures whenever and wherever it can. Although this entry assumes that the stregoni is a more-or-less typical vampire, it might be interest-

ing to present a stregoni version of just about any of the non-European vampires in this book. It may be possible that the stregoni does what it does to make amends for evil deeds that it did in life.

Tlacique (spectre)

This native Mexican vampire is able to assume the form of a turkey but, more interestingly, can also become a blazing ball of fire. In the latter form it can fly through the air and inflict terrible injuries or cause very destructive fires. In addition the these powers, the blood-drinking tlacique are skilled in the arts of black magic.

Ustrel (goblin)

A Bulgarian vampire, the ustrel is created when a child is born on a Saturday and dies before being baptized. Nine days after the death of this child, it returns to feed upon the blood of cattle. As the ustrel feeds, it leaves a trail of dead animals that can serve to foster disease or deprive a village of milk, cheese, and beef. The creature can be destroyed by driving an animal upon which it is feeding through a fire.

Vetala (wraith)

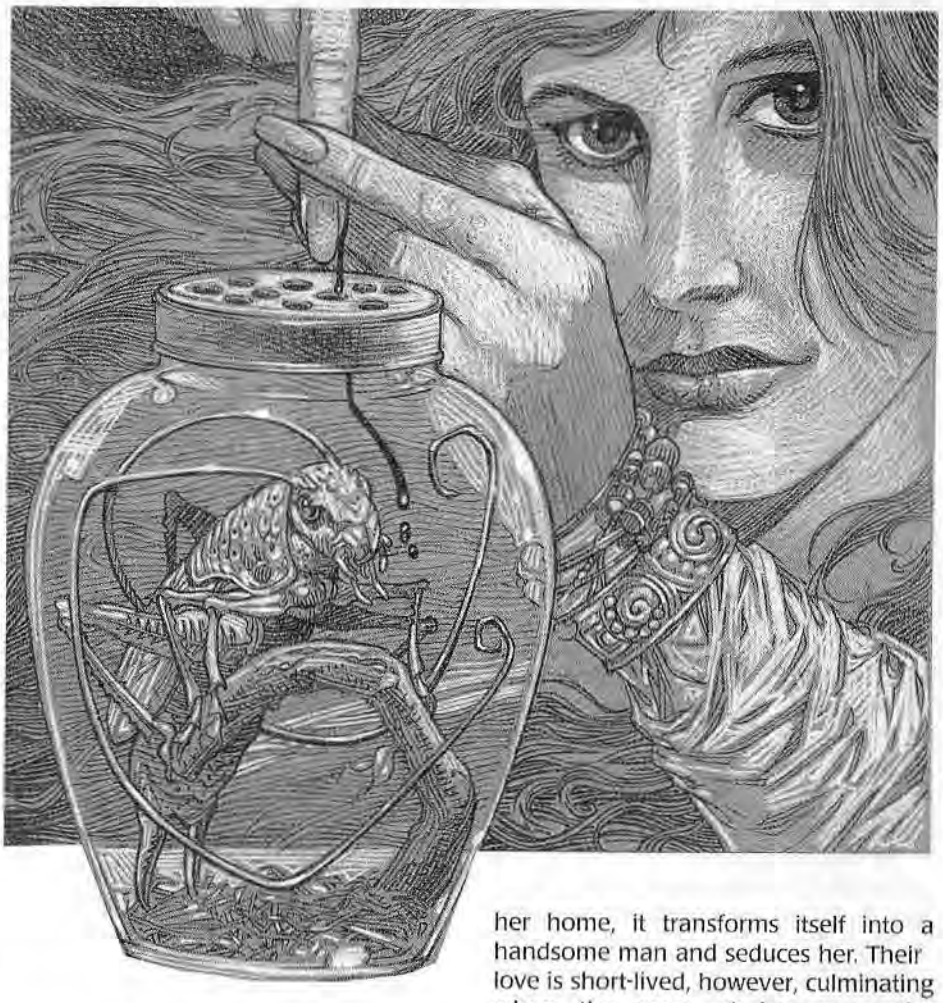
The vetala is a spectral Indian creature. It is dark green and rides upon a phantasmal green horse. Vetala often carry a torch in one hand and a sword in the other. They can also take the form of an old woman and, on rare occasions, have been known to be helpful. Vetala feed on the blood of drunken or insane women.

Wurdalak (lycanthrope, werewolf)

This is a Serbian creature of great power and unusual origin. A wurdalak is a werewolf that has died and then returned as a vampire. In game terms, it has the powers and abilities of both creatures, allowing it to confuse and mystify those who hunt it. Wurdalak are often served by packs of wolves and werewolves.

Xloptuny (wight)

This is a Russian vampire created upon the death of someone who has been excommunicated or renounced the faith. Among the acts most likely to transform a person into a xloptuny are blasphemy, practicing black magic, and heresy. Because of the diversity of faiths in most role-playing games, a wide variety of xloptuny might exist. These



creatures often attempt to lure the faithful into following their ill-fated path.

Yara-ma-yha-sho (lizard man)

This is a creature who haunts the Australian aborigines. This unusual vampire lurks in fig trees and resembles a red-skinned man with a bloated stomach and a stringy black mane of hair. When someone camps beneath a fig tree, the yara-ma-yha-sho leaps down on them. If the victim does not resist, the creature loses interest before it harms its prey.

Those who try to fight off the yara-ma-yha-sho discover that its fingers and toes are covered with suckers that drain blood. Victims are not slain but rendered so weak that they cannot escape. Helpless prey are dragged into the fig tree, where they provide meals for several days before dying.

Zmeu (ghost)

The zmeu is a Moldavian spirit-vampire that can assume physical form when it must. It comes by night, appearing to beautiful widows in the form of a column of magical fire. Upon entering her home, it transforms itself into a handsome man and seduces her. Their love is short-lived, however, culminating when the zmeu drains away the widow's life.

Sources

The information upon which this article is based was drawn from a number of sources. The most important are Matthew Bunson's *The Vampire Encyclopedia* (Crown Publishers), *The New LaRousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (The Hamlyn Publishing Group), and the numerous works of K.M. Briggs. No fantasy or horror game referee should be without them.

In addition to his work on the original RAVENLOFT *line, William W. Connors has written the* Masque of the Red Death *boxed set and the* Gothic Earth Gazetteer, *which provide a perfect setting for the vampires in this article. Most recently, Bill has completed work on the* DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ *game and the revised* RAVENLOFT *game rules and setting.*

Beyond the Flanaess

by Skip Williams

cartography by Dave Sutherland

Ever wonder what the world of Oerth looked like beyond the borders of the Flanaess? Wonder no more! The TSR staff and the GREYHAWK® setting's original creator sketched out this map of Oerth in the early 1980s.

My Dear Mordenkainen,

I'm glad you found my doodles enlightening! I cobbled the map together from diverse sources – mostly the recollections of some of the "old guard." I can't vouchsafe the place names; doubtless the locals have their own names for many of the areas. Enclosed are some more excerpts from my journals.

Heward

Baklunish Empire: More properly called the Baklunish Basin these days. A land of steppes populated by nomadic horsemen.

Barbarian Seameast: A windswept land covered with primeval forests where fiery but convivial tribesmen dwell.

Celestial Imperium: A vast nation peopled with a hard-working peasantry ruled by a complex bureaucracy.

Dragons Island: Tales from the Celestial Imperium speak of a land ruled by a dragon prince. If such a place exists, it probably lies here.

Elvanian Forest: An enclave of lofty trees clinging to foothills rising from the desert below. Elves and other wild sylvan races dwell here.

Elven Lands: It seems that eleven seafarers crossed to Solnor Ocean millennia ago and established a kingdom upon this peninsula.

Empire of Lynn: A sea of burning sands fill most of Oerik's western end. The fabled city of Lynn, perhaps settled by seafarers from the Flanaess, has grown rich from coastal trade and the desert's mineral wealth.

Erypt: An arid land ruled by a dynasty of priest kings.

Fireland: A land not unlike the Hellfurnaces region of the Flanaess. Volcanoes and geysers sprout amid glaciers. A hardy folk dwells among the coastal fjords.

Gigantea: A land populated by giants, or so I've heard tell.

High Khanate: An arid land peopled by two tribes of sturdy nomads. The inlanders resemble the horsemen of the Balkanish Basin, but on the coast they take to boats.

Hyperboria: My own name for an icy continent whose interior holds Oerth's north pole and secrets even I have not fathomed. A semipermanent bridge of ice connects the land to Oerik proper, but the crossing is treacherous at best.

Ishtarland: A land watered by southern storms and at least two great rivers. The city of Ishtar vies with the merchants of Lynn and the warlords of Tharquish for control of coastal trade.

Kingdoms of the Marches: A temperate land filled with princely states. Perhaps another locale colonized by seafarers from across the Solnor.

Low Khanate: A companion realm to the High Khanate; named more for its location in a deep vale below the mountains than for any inferior status. A hidden valley reputedly contains the tombs of khans from both realms.

Nippon: A densely populated island nation of fishermen, warriors, and poets. Unsure of the place's real name.

Nippon Dominion: A protectorate only recently conquered by the warriors of Nippon.

Orcreich: A nation of orcs ruled by a tyrannical king. The orcs seem to thrive under the brutal regime.

Polaria: Not a landmass at all, but a collection of islands locked in a semipermanent ice cap.

Red Kingdom: This land is so named for the color of its rocks. It's inhabitants remain unknown to me.

Suel Empire: You know this area as the Sea of Dust. Tales of its former glory is known to you.

Tarquis Dominions: An ancient protectorate of the Tharquish Empire.

Tharquish Empire: An island nation of seafarers who have ambitions that extend to the neighboring continents.

The Tribes of Enllaves: A land of proud desert nomads who eke out a living on a high plateau that escapes the worst heat of the sand sea. A few tribesmen live in mud-brick towns built around central squares that contain steep-sided pyramids. I have never learned whether the pyramids serve as monuments, tombs, temples, or something else altogether.

Wall of Tsian: A massive fortification separating the Celestial Imperium from Orcreich, a formidable deterrent to anyone but the king of Orcreich. The Imperium has begun another, even grander wall farther west.

Zindia: A tropical land where rich cities rise from steaming jungles.

Celestial Sea: A warm shallow gulf where merchants from Erypt and the Imperium ply their trades.

Gulf of Ishtar: The privateers of Tharquish and the fleets of Ishtar vie for control here.

Gulf of Ra: A deep body reputed to hide a kingdom of sahuagin.

Jothunheim Sea: A frigid body of water littered with icebergs. Giants ply the waters in great drakkars.

Mare Mysticum: A mystery to me.

Ocean of Storms: A region of gray sea lashed by endless tempests.

Oceanum Titanicum: The easternmost extent of what you know as the Solnor ocean.

Pearl Sea: So named for the rich pearl beds found on Nippon's eastern shores.

Sea of Hyperboria: An ice-choked stretch of deep water where the coastal tribesmen of the High Khanate hunt and fish from hide boats.

Sea of Nippon: A body of water made infamous by freak storms and enormous sea monsters – if the tales prove true.

Sea of the Dragon King: A deep arm of the pearl sea noted for its cobalt blue waters and teeming coral reefs.

Sea of Thunder: A smaller, but no less violent, companion to the Sea of Storms. It surrounds the southern ice cap.

Skip Williams is a veteran of the original GREYHAWK campaign. Rufus, the red-bearded warrior from the village of Hommlet (featured in the Temple of Elemental Evil *adventure) was one of his player characters.*

GREYHAWK ADVENTURES
Hyperboria
Jotnumheim Sea
Fireland
Elven Lands
Gigantea
Sea of Hyperboria
Orcreich
Baklunish Empire
Oceanum Titanicum
Mare Mysticum
Kingdoms of the Marches
High Khanate
Low Khanate
Suel Empire
Elvanian Forest
Celestial Imperium
Zindia
Empire of Lynn
Dragons Island
Celestial Sea
Sea of Nippon
Nippon
Sea of the Dragon King
Pearl Sea
Nippon Dominion
The Tribes of Enllaves
Tarquis Dominions
Ishtarland
Erypt
Gulf of Ra
Red Kingdom
Turquish Empire
Gulf of Ishtar
Barbarian Seameast
Ocean of Storms
Sea of Thunder
Polaria

Goblins!

The murmur and cackle of uncouth laughter..The pad of soft booted feet and paws...The creak of leather harnesses and wooden wheels...And what the heck is that smell?!? The Goblins are on the march again (no suprise there!) and they're staging their bid for conquest from Ral Partha.

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This Army grouping endorsed by Fester Pock-Eye, Goblin Shaman.

introduction by Ray Vallese

Remember that satirical recruitment slogan for the army? "Journey to unique foreign lands, meet interesting and exciting new people, and kill them." Well, that's how many AD&D® game players feel about a trip to the planes – that it's an exotic monster safari (or a death sentence, depending on the whim of the Dungeon Master). DMs send Player Characters to the stomping grounds of fiery tanar'ri, logical modrons, almighty deities, and other creatures beyond imagination just to let the PCs do some stomping – or get stomped in turn.

That can be fun, but the vast AD&D multiverse should be more than just a big dungeon. And the PLANESCAPE™ campaign setting puts all the wonder of every imaginable AD&D setting within reach.

The PLANESCAPE setting makes it possible, desirable, and even easy to run fascinating adventures and long-term campaigns in the Outer Planes, the Inner Planes, the Ethereal, and the Astral. See, the planes aren't about racking up weird kills and finding odd treasures. They're places of endless majesty and mystery, colorful realms where the familiar laws of physics and reason go out the window. The immediate goal – simple survival – depends more on ingenuity than on strength, because there's always something tougher around the bend. The greater goal – learning the secrets of the multiverse and your character's place in it – depends on the power of philosophy and belief, because on the planes, faith can literally move mountains.

That doesn't mean a paladin can just think a holy sword into his hands. It does mean that if he holds strongly to his beliefs, he can try to impose them on his surroundings and shape the destiny of the multiverse. Naturally, he can't do it alone; he needs to throw in with others who believe the same things. Groups of like-minded thinkers called factions struggle constantly to convince everyone else that their path is the right one, that their beliefs are the truest and the best. For example, members of the Xaositects want to share the random beauty of chaos wherever they go. Those who belong to the Harmonium feel that only law and order – specifically, their law, their order – can keep the peace. All of the factions (see *The Factol's Manifesto* for full details) think they're doing the right thing, but they sometimes resort to harsh methods to spread their doctrines; that's why we call them "philosophers with clubs."

Of course, there's a lot more to do in a PLANESCAPE campaign than just sit around and think. Faction affiliation is a bit like alignment; it offers a set of guidelines to follow, but life still must be lived, and the adventure of the planes is inexhaustible – after all, the planes are infinite. From the clockwork gears of Mechanus, to the swirling soup of Limbo, to the bottomless terror of the Abyss, the planes can and do hold everything. Heroes might need to convince a godlike titan on Carceri to set free a dwarf spirit sent there by mistake (a scenario from the *Well of Worlds* adventure anthology) or prevent a rising tide of savagery on the Beastlands from drowning the entire multiverse in blood (*Something Wild*), or stop a violent madman from carrying out a ritual designed to turn himself into an honest-to-goodness deity (*Harbinger House*).

So how do you start? Obviously, with the PLANESCAPE Campaign setting. But how does a DM move his players into the planes? Simple: Let their characters step through a portal that whisks them to the dizzying city of Sigil, a medieval metropolis thought to lie at the center of the entire multiverse. Why is it dizzying? Well, for one thing, it's shaped like a horizontal doughnut, with the city built on the inside surface of the hole. At any point a person can look up and see the other side of town high above (and upside down). More importantly, though, Sigil is a tumultuous melting pot of creatures and goods from all over the planes, a city where devas and fiends sit together at the same table. And the only thing that keeps them from tearing each other apart is the dreaded, enigmatic Lady of Pain, the so-called ruler of Sigil (it's her spiky head that sits in the middle of the PLANESCAPE logo).

But the strangest and most attractive feature of Sigil is that the city's riddled with portals. From Sigil, a traveler can instantly go literally anywhere in the multiverse – assuming, of course, that he can find the right portal, learn how to open it, and figure out where it leads. As they say, getting there is half the fun.

Why not take a trip to the planes and see what's out there? *The Planes of Chaos, Planes of Law,* and *Planes of Conflict* boxed sets detail the splendor of the Outer Planes, and the recently released *Planewalker's Handbook* serves as a complete player's guide to the setting. Thrillseekers might want to try *Hellbound: The Blood War,* a boxed set crammed with information and adventures about the eternal, infernal clash between the baatezu and tanar'ri. And the campaign's central storyline for 1997 will spotlight the dead gods that drift like debris through the Astral – and will feature the return of an infamous AD&D villain long thought dead.

Step through the nearest portal. Open the door to adventure. And open your mind to the rich potential of the AD&D multiverse.

Ray Vallese has been an editor and designer for the PLANESCAPE setting for over two years. Needless to say, it's his favorite AD&D setting.

A Handful of Keys

Portal transportation in the PLANESCAPE® Campaign

by John R. Prager

illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi

As noted in *A DM Guide to the Planes* in the PLANESCAPE® campaign setting, portals are the preferred means to travel the unfathomable distances which separate the planes of existence. Literally, each portal is a threshold – a doorway, window, arch, sewer entrance, or similar structure. Most of the time, such thresholds merely serve their pedestrian function of entry and egress. But, if circumstances are precisely right, the portal allows access to somewhere else: a plane infinitely far removed from the mundane "other side of the doorway."

As befits a place known as "the City of Doors," Sigil boasts the greatest collection of portals in the multiverse. Indeed, the few sages who have specialized in the abstruse field of transdimensional mechanics generally agree that all entryways and thresholds in Sigil are portals, or have served as active portals in the past, or will become active portals some time in the future. The word "active" is crucial, as we shall see, for portals can provide reliable transportation only at specific times. In the multiverse beyond Sigil, active portals vary from extremely rare to merely uncommon; a great many of these lead to Sigil itself. This rarity is explained in that portals cannot be created by deliberate mortal workings; even a *wish* spell cannot serve to bring a portal into existence. However, it has not been established that any deity, power, or force is responsible for the creation of portals, either, leaving the entire subject shrouded in mystery. Some loremasters conjecture that portals are natural phenomena beyond even the ken of the gods, but most sages merely reflect on the absence of evidence and keep their thoughts on the matter private.

Discovering active portals is often a matter of luck. These gateways do not radiate magic except during the instants in which they open to another plane of existence. A traveler from the Prime Material Plane could discern the existence of a portal by using a *true seeing* spell or similar magic, but even then he would have no clue as to the destination of the passageway. Natives of the other planes – so-called planars, petitioners, and proxies – have the instinctive ability to detect portals, but even they must resort to specialized divination magic to determine conclusively the destination of such a passage (in particular, the *warp sense* spell from *Sigil and Beyond* in the campaign setting).

That a particular archway or door frame has been known to provide access to the Paraelemental Plane of Ooze in the past is no assurance that it will do so now, even for the adventurer who knows the special trick that would normally trigger the portal into operating. Every portal follows a unique activity cycle. A particular gateway may be active as a portal only temporarily, or it may function only for a limited period of time before switching into an inactive mode. Moreover, a few thresholds may have different planar destinations from time to time – yesterday providing passage to Baator, and tomorrow functioning as a portal to the demiplane of Shadow. Or the portal may shift its physical locus periodically, from a cupboard door to a marble archway several city blocks or miles away. Several sages of the Fraternity of Order conjecture that the activity periods of portals are regulated by particular conjugations of gears on the plane of Mechanus, but evidence to support this has been elusive.

By this point, the traveler may have decided transportation by portal is too fraught with uncertainty to be trusted. That's not the case. Admittedly, there are elements of unpredictability in the use of planar passageways, but four essential facts allow the canny adventurer to avoid blundering into certain doom. First, the vast majority of portals, over 80%, are stable at both ends. Such portals may periodically cycle into inactive modes, but they will not deliver a cutter to an unexpected destination. Second, even shifting portals are anchored to a definite location at one terminus. For instance, a particular portal in Sigil spends eight days attached to a sewer entrance spikeward of the Palace of the Jester, then it is attached to a cupboard door in a small hovel in Laughing Cat alley for just one day before the cycle repeats. This shifting portal invariably takes travelers to a single location, the foredeck of the "Bereft Mermaid," a sunken ship deep in the Elemental Plane of Water. Similarly, a window casement of the Black Sails Tavern in Sigil's Lower Ward follows a fixed schedule in providing access to Limbo, the Plane of Paraelemental Salt, and a cave entrance near the Outland town of Glorium; but a planehopper would require a specific item at a specific time to trigger the portal.

This highlights the third fact that prevents accidental planar travel: portals generally follow predictable schedules. A character who knows the pattern followed by the Black Sails Tavern portal can be assured he will rendezvous with his friends at Glorium in time to set sail for Ysgard; he will not find himself accidentally embedded in primal chaos fighting a dozen green slaadi in Limbo. A rogue who wishes to see for himself whether any treasure remains in the hold of the "Mermaid" can wait until the Sigil end of the portal becomes accessible. It is true that temporary portals occasionally flare into existence or vanish unpredictably, but most active portals in Sigil follow pre-determined patterns.

Portal keys are, of course, the fourth factor that prevents accidental plane traveling. Active portals require a specific action, phrase, or material object in order to complete the transdimensional linkage. The key is unique to each planar connection; indeed, the par-

Table A: Sigil's buildings

1d1,000	
001–004	Airion's Boarding House (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
005	Allesha's Pantry (Hive: ITC-106)
006–022	The Armory (Lady: SB-80; ITC-32; FM-42)
023–025	Azure Iris Inn (Lady: ITC-39; UFS-109)
026	Benni's Tap Room (Hive: ITC-102)
027	Black Sails tavern (Lower: ITC-48)
028	Black Wind Tavern (Clerk: ITC-62)
029	Bones of the Night (Lower: ITC-48)
030	Bottle & Jug tavern (Hive: ITC-107)
031–033	Bronze Bezants loanshop (Market/Guild: ITC-90)
034–039	Builders' Fellowship guildhall (Market/Guild: ITC-87)
040	Butcher's Block alehouse (Hive: ITC-102)
041	Chinzpeter's Used Clothing (Market/Guild: UFS-124)
042–045	Chirper's (Market/Guild: ITC-93)
046–069	City Barracks (Lady: SB-80; ITC-32; FM-92)
070–093	City Court (Lady: SB-80; ITC-34; FM-71)
094–117	Civic Festhall (Clerk: SB-84; ITC-63; FM-134)
118	Cold Bowl soup kitchen (Hive: FM-29)
119–124	Council of Innkeepers guildhall (Market/Guild: ITC-87)
125	Dark Sigh Tavern (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
126	Deadfinger's Tavern (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
127	Dirk and Firkin alehouse (Lower: ITC-57)
128–144	The Ditch (Lower: ITC-49)
145	Dusty Wig tavern (Lady: UFS-73)
146	Ensin's Discount Elixirs (Market/Guild: ITC-95)
147–152	Escort Guild offices (Market/Guild: ITC-87)
153	Eyes of Elysium tavern (Clerk: ITC-62)
154	Face of Gith tavern (Lower: ITC-57; UFS-123)
155–156	Fat Candle Pub (Market/Guild: ITC-84; UFS-29)
157	Feathernest Inn (Market/Guild: ITC-84; UFS-29)
158–162	Fell's tattoo parlor (Market/Guild: UFS-36)
163–168	Flame Pits bathhouse (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
169–173	Fortune's Wheel gambling house (Lady: ITC-36)
174–180	Friendly Fiend magic shop (Lower: UFS-8)
181-204	The Gatehouse (Hive: SB-83; ITC-111; FM-31)
205–207	Golden Ball Pawnshop (Lower: ITC-50)
208–211	Golden Bariaur Inn (Lady: SB-78; ITC-39)
212–235	The Great Bazaar (Market/Guild: SB-89; ITC-96; FM-83)
236–259	The Great Foundry (Lower: SB-81; ITC-50; FM-20)
260–283	The Great Gymnasium (Market/Guild: SB-88; ITC-96; FM-145)
284	Green Mill Tavern (Lower: ITC-51)
285–288	Green Stone stables (Hive: ITC-111)
289–291	Greengage Cider Shop (Clerk: SB-86; ITC-63)
292–295	Grundlethum's Automatic Scribe (Clerk: SB-86; ITC-63)
296–307	Hall of Information (Clerk: ITC-66)
308–331	Hall of Records (Clerk: SB-84; ITC-71; FM-62)
332–355	Hall of Speakers (Clerk: SB-86; ITC-72; FM-124)
356	The Hands of Time (Lower: ITC-51)
357–369	Harbinger House (Lower: ITC-55)
370–373	The Harim safe house (Market/Guild: FM-116)
374–379	Harys Hatchis' tout shop (Market/Guild: UFS-44)
380	Heshter's Arms inn (Clerk: ITC-62)
381–389	High House residence or office* (Lady: ITC-30)
390–413	The Hive (Hive: SB-84; ITC-113; FM-154)
414-421	Hive Ward tenement* (Hive)
422	Hooded Lantern (Lower: ITC-59)
423	House of the Griffin (Hive: FM-116)
424	Hynighter's Horses (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
425–426	Imel's Happy Tongue (Market/Guild: ITC-81)
427–434	Inn, hostelry, or tavern* (Clerk)
435–441	Inn, hostelry, or tavern* (Hive)
442–445	Inn, hostelry, or tavern* (Lady)
446–457	Inn, hostelry, or tavern* (Lower)
458–467	Inn, hostelry, or tavern* (Market/Guild)
468–478	Interplanar Importers (Lady: FM-115)
479	Iron Heat inn (Clerk: ITC-62)
480–482	Jeena Ealy's compound (Clerk: ITC-72)
483–485	Lazz School of Vivid Unpleasantness (Clerk: ITC-74)
486–495	Marble District residence* (Hive: ITC-106)
496	Masty's tavern (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
497	Mermaid's Cups (Lower: ITC-59)
498	Milori the translator (Clerk: UFS-64)
499–522	Mortuary (Hive: SB-83; ITC-113, FM-52)
523–532	Mortuary catacombs (Hive: UFS-62, 82)
533–549	The Night Market (Hive: SB-83; ITC-111)
550–551	Nittman's Aerial Tours (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
552–560	Office of the Master of Portals (Lady: ITC-31)
561–583	Office* (Clerk)
584–593	Office* (Lady)
594–602	Office* (Market/Guild)
603–608	Order of Master Clerks guildhall (Market/Guild: ITC-87)
609–610	Orsmonder's Meats (Hive: ITC-101, 112)
611–623	The Other Place spa (Market/Guild: UFS-46)
624–627	O'pok's History Museum (Clerk: UFS-124)
628–631	Palace of the Jester (Lady: ITC-40)
632–635	Parted Veil Bookshop (Lower: UFS-16)
636	Parts & Pieces (Market/Guild: UFS-92)
637–647	Planar Trade Consortium offices (Clerk: UFS-30)
648–662	The Prison (Lady: SB-79; ITC-41; FM-103)
663–674	The Public Baths (Lady)
675–678	Quake's Place (Hive: FM-155)
679	Red Lion Inn (Market/Guild: FM-84)
680	Red Pony Inn (Lower: ITC-59)
681–693	Residence* (Clerk)
694–705	Residence* (Hive)
706–715	Residence* (Lady)
716–731	Residence* (Lower)
732–738	Residence* (Market/Guild)
739–742	Severed Head weapons shop (Market/Guild: ITC-86)
743–766	The Shattered Temple (Lower: SB-82; ITC-55; FM-10)
767–774	Shop or vendor* (Clerk)
775–783	Shop or vendor* (Hive)
784–789	Shop or vendor* (Lady)
790–793	Shop or vendor* (Lower)
794–816	Shop or vendor* (Market/Guild)
817	Shrinker's tavern (Hive: ITC-102)
818	Singing Vortex Inn (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
819-822	Sister Cade's church (Hive: UFS-123)
823–832	The Slags (Hive: ITC-115)
833	Slumbering Lamb Inn (Clerk: ITC-62)
834	Snapped Finger Tavern (Hive: ITC-102)
835–842	Society of the Luminiferous Aether (Lower: ITC-55)
843–846	Speckled Rat (Lower: ITC-59)
847	Square Bar (Lady: FM-116)
848	Stone & Cog construction (Market/Guild: UFS-124)
849–853	Styx Oarsman tavern (Lower: SB-82; ITC-56; UFS-85)
854	Sullen Moon tavern (Clerk: ITC-62)
855	Sword and Buckler (Lower: ITC-59)
856–859	Tea Street Transit dispatch office (Clerk: ITC-74)
860–865	Teamsters' Guild offices (Market/Guild: ITC-87)
866	Tear of the Barghest (Clerk: ITC-62)
867–869	Temple of Hermes (Lady: ITC-44)
870–873	Temple of the Abyss (Lady: ITC-43)
874–882	Temple* (Clerk)
883–887	Temple* (Hive)
888–896	Temple* (Lady)
897–901	Temple* (Lower)
902–905	Temple* (Market/Guild)
906–909	Tensar's Employment Service (Clerk: ITC-77)
910	Tenth Pit (Lower: ITC-59)
911–916	Thelinagra's chaos-shaping studio (Lower: UFS-124)
917–919	Tivvum's Antiquities (Market/Guild: UFS-89)
920–922	Tower of the Worm (Lady: ITC-44)
923–926	Traban's Forge (Lady: SB-80; ITC-45)
927	Tripicus' study (Lady: UFS-103)
928	Turby's Inn (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
929–932	Twelve Factol's Hall (Lady: ITC-32)
933–948	Ubiquitous Wayfarer Inn (Lower: ITC-57)
949–951	Velvet Harness inn and stablery (Clerk: ITC-62)
952	Weary Head Inn (Hive: UFS-68)
953–958	Weary Spirit Infirmary (Hive: ITC-121)
959	White Casket (Lower: ITC-59)
960	Whole Note Inn (Clerk: ITC-62)
961	Woodman's Retreat Tavern (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
962–965	Wooly Cupgrass' laboratory (Market/Guild: UFS-22)
966–973	Workshop* (Clerk)
974–982	Workshop* (Lower)
983–995	Workshop* (Market/Guild)
996	Xanist's shop (Market/Guild: ITC-97)
997	Yawning Rat Inn (Market/Guild: ITC-84)
998	Ylem's tower (Hive: UFS-78, 117)
999	Zakk's Corpse Curing (Market/Guild: ITC-99)
1000	Zero alehouse (Hive: ITC-103)

Table B: Structural portal placement

1d6	
1	External door or window
2	Main floor, internal structural door
3	Lower floor, internal structural door
4	Upper floor, internal structural door
5	Outbuilding or garden
6	Furniture: closet, cupboard, trunk, etc.

Table C: Outlands locations

1d100	
01–03	Automata
04–06	Bedlam
07	Caverns of Thought
08–09	Court of Light
10–13	Crossroads*
14–16	Curst
17–19	Dwarven Mountain
20–22	Ecstasy
23–25	Excelsior
26–28	Faunel
29–31	Fortitude
32–34	Glorium
35	The Great Pass
36–37	Gzemnid's realm
38–40	Hopeless
41	Ironridge
42–44	Mausoleum of Chronepsis
45–47	Palace of Judgment
48–50	Plague-Mort
51–53	Realm of the Norns
54–56	Ribcage
57–59	Rigus
60	River Ma'at shoreline
61–62	Semuanya's Bog
63–69	Settlement*
70–72	Sheela Peryroyl's realm
73–75	Sylvania
76	The Hidden Realm
77–78	Thebestys
79	Thoth's Estate
80	Tir fo Thiunn
81–82	Tir na Og
83–85	Torch
86–88	Tradegate
89–90	Tvashtri's Laboratory
91	Valley of the Spine
92–97	Wilderness area*
98–00	Xaos

Key to references

Sigil and Beyond (from the PLANESCAPE set)	SB
In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil	ITC
Uncaged: Faces of Sigil	UFS
The Factol's Manifesto	FM

ticular portal key can be viewed as the thing which defines a portal's existence. Our rogue who wishes to loot the sunken ship needs a whelk shell to effect passage to the Plane of Water, whether he chooses the entry in the Lady's Ward or in the Hive. The window to the Black Sails Tavern requires any of three different portal keys, depending on which planar connection is active at a given time. If a brass spearhead opens passage to Glorium, that same object has no effect when the portal is attuned to Limbo or the Plane of Salt. Travelers should be aware that a few portals have a fixed location in Sigil but use a single portal key to provide access to multiple planes; in these uncommon cases, the adventurer should maintain a reliable chart of the portal's destination schedule.

A character who approaches a portal without the proper key can interact with the aperture only in a mundane way, passing through the window or door to the space beyond. But a character who carries the appropriate item, or who says the proper word, triggers the magical nature embedded in the threshold. There is a brief flicker, and a two-way passage to another place is opened for just a heartbeat. In that brief span, up to six characters can pass across the opening to the far terminus. Observers will sometimes catch a glimpse of the destination before the portal closes. Of course, the portal may be triggered again by presentation of the correct portal key. For the traveler, passage between planes is instantaneous and perfectly safe.

Creating and controlling portals is the province of the DM. The DM must determine each portal's terminus, its schedule (if the portal is one of the rare shifting gates), and its key or keys.

Varieties of portal keys

The optional spell component system affords an analogy for thinking about portals in the AD&D® game system: an active portal can be considered an incomplete spell effect, lacking just one special thing to bring a magical effect to completion. For component spells, it is a combination of gesture, incantation, physical items, and the will of the spellcaster that makes magic happen. In general, a portal needs only one of these factors to serve as a trigger. This is an important difference. Usually, the portal opener need not will the portal to function. An incautious adventurer who wanders under the wrong archway carrying the relevant physical portal key ends up on another plane regardless of his intentions. Of course, this risk is minimized by the fact that most portal keys are fairly rare items.

Indeed, the DM should focus on three guidelines when selecting portal keys for most frequently-used portals: they should be uncommon, singular, and apposite their destination. First, portal keys must be uncommon in order to make portal transportation safe yet practicable. A common key – a broadsword, for instance – would make the portal unsafe, since it would be triggered accidentally with astounding frequency. A very rare key, such as a sword held by the statue of Horus in the city of Gradsul on the Prime Material Plane world of Oerth, is impractical, since the item is so difficult to obtain that the portal would likely never be used. Ideally, the DM will choose portal keys that are not likely to be possessed casually by PCs but that are obtainable with a bit of patience, luck, or money.

Portal keys ought to be singular. A living fish can be the key to the plane of elemental Water, but it should not be the key to every portal leading there. Diversity is crucial if the DM hopes to sustain the sense of wonder that should be the goal of every PLANESCAPE campaign. The lists of portal keys included in this article are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are intended as springboards for the DM's creativity.

Sustaining the tone of a PLANESCAPE campaign is also why portal keys should be appropriate to their destination plane. Most often, a key is symbolically significant to the destination plane. Sometimes the symbolism can be literal: a gear could provide passage to Mechanus. At other times, the DM may desire a more metaphorical connection; for example, a horseradish root could evoke passage to the plane of Lightning because of the sharp tang of the root's taste and the white, forked shape of the root's structure. Portals that connect Sigil to the Outlands or to Prime Material Plane worlds will not often have this symbolism, since these planes are relatively mundane places. Even so, a fresh loaf of bread can be used as a key that brings characters from Sigil to a Prime Material Plane location near a bakery.

An additional guideline applies to use of portal keys, as opposed to their selection: portal keys should be obscure. PCs newly introduced to the PLANESCAPE

Table D: Portal keys by destination plane

Abyss
a coil or spiral of silver wire
a leaf of poison ivy
a spiderweb
action: chew a mouthful of mustard seeds
action: speak a lie
an iron bucket without a bottom
magical item: *phylactery of monstrous attention*
magical item: *ring of contrariness*
scale of a deep dragon
spell: *curse* (reverse of bless)
the wingbone of a wyvern
thought: anticipation of revenge

Acheron
a gargoyle (a stone statue, not the monster)
a headsman's axe
a lead toy soldier
a rusted metal box filled with pebbles
a sledgehammer
action: crook a finger (the beckoning gesture)
action: self-wounding with an edged weapon (1 hp damage)
an iron or steel meat hook
four metal caltrops
magical item: *harp of discord*
magical item: *jewel of attacks*
spell: *flesh to stone*

Air
a (nonmagical) hand fan
a bellows
a kite
a sheet of sailcloth canvas, at least one square yard
a soap bubble
a windmill vane
action: yawn
magical item: *horn of bubbles*
memory: the smell of perfume
scale of a silver dragon
spell: *gust of wind*
wind chimes

Arborea
a boar's head
a broken axe handle
a cypress bough
a discus
a freshly-picked ripe olive
a glass decanter of wine
a handful of white sand
a laurel wreath
a white linen toga
action: speak an original oratorical declamation or poem
magical item: *boots of dancing*
three acorns

Arcadia
a conductor's baton
a four-leaf clover
a gavel
a matched pair of chess pieces, one white, one black
a plumb bob
a shepherd's crook
action: salute
action: swear an oath or promise (save vs. magic or *geased* to fulfill the oath)
action: wear a plow harness
an abacus
emotion: humility
memory: the smell of the air after a thunderstorm

Ash
a candle snuffer
a slice of burnt toast
a thurible
an empty brazier made of lead and gold
an empty tinder box
magical item: *ring of weakness*
scale of a white dragon
spell: *affect normal fires* (quench version)
spell: *chill metal*
spell: *fire shield, cold version*

Astral
a cartwheel with sixteen spokes
a compass (the magnetic navigational tool)

a handful of silver dust
action: tell a secret
an astrolabe
an ounce of quicksilver
emotion: loneliness
five star anise seeds
magical item: *ring of shooting stars*
magical item: *potion of invulnerability*
spell: *sanctuary*
spell: *vacancy*

Baator
a length of heavy iron chain, nine links long
a scale from a green dragon
a sprig of nightshade
a tin funnel
a xylophone made of rib bones
emotion: pride
magical item: *talisman of ultimate evil*
magical item: *scarab of death*
nine obsidian beads
powdered ruby stirred into ink
the linen wrappings of a mummified corpse (not necessarily an undead mummy)
thirteen thorns from a rosebush

Beastlands
a fertile egg
a grass skirt
a loincloth made of untanned hide
a scrimshaw fish
a sprig of catnip
a totem pole
a two-foot length of green ribbon or bunting
action: toot on a whistle or birdcall
an arrow without an arrowhead
memory: a summer dawn
spell: *conjure animals*
two peacock feathers

Bytopia
a chain of sausages
a cheese sandwich
a farming spade
a pair of castanets
a pint flask of maple syrup
a scale from a bronze dragon
action: a handshake
action: break the wishbone of a domestic fowl
action: crash a pair of cymbals
action: reflect a candle flame between two mirrors
action: separate two lodestones
two halves of an opened walnut shell

Carceri
a basket woven from razorvine
a bottle cork
a bottle of frozen black ink
a living canary
a mandrake root
a metal bar from a prison cell
a padlock
a pair of scissors made of bone
a spiked dog collar
an iron handbell without a clapper
emotion: despair
magical item: *amulet of inescapable location*

Dust
a fine-mesh sieve
a handful of powdered brass
a mortar and pestle
a pail of sand
a pinch of snuff
a scale from a yellow dragon
action: shatter a thin sheet of mica
spell: *destroy water* (reverse of create water)
spell: *disintegrate*
the antenna of a rust monster

Earth
a bone that has been buried by a dog
a catapult stone
a cobblestone
a cockatrice feather
a handful of gravel
a scale from a sapphire dragon
a shovel
action: write the alchemical symbol for earth in chalk on a piece of slate
an unglazed clay flowerpot
spell: *stoneskin*
the hinge of a coffin
the knucklebones of a hill giant

Elysium
a blue pennant or flag
a fish spear
a handful of reed stalks
a spinning-wheel
a water lily
a wooden bucket of ocean foam
action: juggle three items
action: spill a cup of melted snow
action: tinkle a glass bell
an aeolian harp
spell: *bless*
the shell of a turtle or tortoise

Ethereal
a bowl of lumpy porridge
a cotton boll
a cracked full-length mirror (glass or metal)
a ewer of curdled milk
a gauze veil
a painter's palette
action: snap fingers
action: whistle or sing the eight notes of a musical octave
magical item: *ring of delusion*
spell: *fog cloud*
spell: *cantrip*
spell: *invisibility*

Fire
a branding iron
a brass minaret one foot tall
a bronze lantern
a fireplace poker
a glassblower's pipette
a pinch of crushed red peppers or paprika
a pint flask of flammable oil
a scale from a brass dragon
a smoldering coal
emotion: rage
magical item: *smoke powder*, one charge
spell: *burning hands*

Gehenna
a censer filled with burning sulfur
a funerary urn
a handful of scorched barley
a pinch of soot
a prospector's pick
a scale from a brown dragon
a stone dagger with a blunt edge but sharp point
emotion: greed
magical item: *cloak of poisonousness*
magical item: *necklace of strangulation*
memory: physical pain
spell: *stinking cloud*

Gray Waste
a rough leaden sphere one foot in diameter
a bough cut from a yew tree within the last day
a handful of grain infected with fungus
a shroud
action: clench both fists
emotion: apathy
magical item: *stone of weight*
magical item: *periapt of foul rotting*
magical item: *ring of clumsiness*
spell: cause disease
spell: *irritation*
two counterfeit silver coins

Ice
a crystal snowflake
a glass stiletto
a handful of rock salt
a scale from a cloud dragon
a skate
a sprig of peppermint
action: shiver
an icepick
hoarfrost
memory: exposure to a bitter winter wind

Lightning
a copper pot holding zinc nuggets and vinegar
a horseradish root
a scale from a blue dragon
a two-foot length of copper wire
action: rapidly shake a one-foot square of sheet metal
action: stroke an amber rod vigorously with a patch of fur
memory: the sound of thunder
spell: *shocking grasp*

setting will quickly learn how transplanar travel is accomplished. They should be able to locate a few portals and discover the keys to activate them, but they should not be given extensive lists of active portals, their schedules, and their keys. Such secrets are jealously guarded by Sigil's factions, and they are never shared with casual newcomers. A factol may certainly reveal a portal's secrets in order to send a PC party on a particular mission, or a sage may disclose a few hints as a reward for a service rendered. Of course, scholarly PCs are free to use divination spells to gather what knowledge they can. The DM must bear in mind, however, that knowing the dark of portal transportation represents power in Sigil, and that PCs ought to work for that power. Portal secrets should be used as rewards for accomplishment or for patient (and expensive) research.

All of these rules can be broken occasionally. A common item can be used as a portal key, making a particular doorway a known "traffic hazard" in Sigil. Or there may be one portal so heavily traveled that everyone knows of its existence. Sometimes a portal key will not be particularly symbolic of its destination. Such variations from convention will serve to keep players on their toes, provided they are used with judicious infrequency.

Despite usage the term "key," not all portals are triggered by material objects. There is a wide variety of options for portal key types. The DM can roll percentile dice and consult the following table, if random selection of the type of portal key is desired:

Random key type selection

1d100	
01–15	word or phrase
16–25	action
26–75	object
76–80	magical item
81–90	thought
91–00	magic spell

Word or phrase portal keys function like verbal components to spells or command words for magical devices. The phrase may be a string of nonsense syllables; the name of a region, town, or realm in the destination plane; or the name of a power or ruler. In some cases, a formal invocation may run to several sentences. Place-names usually serve as keys to portals leading to that specific place, and names of entities can key portals where that being holds power.

DMs will find that verbal keys are easy to generate, making them especially well suited to temporary portals that lead PCs into a specific adventure.

Action portal keys, similarly, resemble somatic spell components. The character must perform a precise series of movements within or through the frame of the aperture in order to trigger the portal. Of course, the DM must consider the physical locus of the threshold when choosing such keys; the act of standing on one's head could serve as a portal key, but not when the opening is a tiny, upper-story window that a character could barely crawl through. On rare occasions, the action needed to trigger a portal requires a check against a character's Strength or Dexterity rating.

The most common portal keys are physical objects. As has been mentioned before, key objects work to open portals automatically, whether or not the character possessing the item intended this effect. Although portal-key items correspond to material components used by spellcasters, there is one potential question that must be answered by each DM: Are items consumed in the process of triggering portals? Material spell components vanish when a spell is cast, with a few exceptions. But the core PLANESCAPE rules are silent on the matter, although there are some implications that key objects may sometimes be lost in the transition. For instance, *Sigil and Beyond* says, "Portals are two-way deals. Step through one way and a cutter can step back the other, if he's still got the gate key to open the door" (p. 55). Sometimes, though, it is crucial for the flow of an adventure that the characters do not have easy access back to their starting point. As a rule of thumb, it is suggested that 30% of all object-triggered portals destroy their keys. That doesn't mean that a particular portal will be destructive 30% of the time; rather, three portals out of ten always destroy keys, and the remainder never do so. The greater the rarity of a key item, the less the chance it will be consumed – which means that PCs may need to go to extraordinary lengths to get a few keys, but those keys can be used multiple times. Even when a portal destroys trigger items, it does so only during the active triggering instant: a character opening such a portal with a pinch of graveyard dust need not fear that his three other pinches (held in reserve for the journey back home) will vanish as he passes through the opening.

Note, too, that only freely carried objects may act to trigger a portal. An item held in an extradimensional space, such as a portable hole or bag of holding, cannot open an interplanar gateway, even if the object is the appropriate one for the portal.

Magical items form a special subtype of objects that may serve as portal keys. Since magic is naturally rare, the DM must be judicious in deciding to use such items as triggers. Most often, potions and dusts should be chosen as appropriate keys, since they are among the most common magical items in the average campaign. It is suggested that such one-shot items are always consumed when used as a portal key: the potion becomes pure water, a magical oil evaporates, or a pinch of dust vanishes. If a charged item, such as a *wand* or *brooch of shielding*, is selected as the key, generally one charge will be drained from the object. In rare cases (15% of the time), the portal drains 1d8 charges; a fixed number is decided when the DM creates the portal. Cursed and malevolent miscellaneous magical items often serve admirably as portal keys. The magic of cursed items is temporarily suppressed for 10d6 rounds when they are used to open a portal, a fact that provides PCs with alternative, but drastic, way to rid themselves of a baleful item.

In choosing magical items as portal keys, the DM should remember not to use items crucial for survival on the destination plane, even if they would have excellent symbolic value. For example, a *potion of water breathing* is a poor choice for a key to the plane of elemental Water, because characters may well require the potion to sustain life. On the other hand, since most creatures on the Plane of Fire are immune to heat effect, a charge from a *wand of fireballs* would be a suitable key choice.

It may surprise some people that mere thoughts can serve as portal keys. An act of will is required to complete a magical spell; that's why mindless creatures or objects cannot work magic. Similarly, a deliberately induced frame of mind serve to open gateways to the planes. It isn't easy. If the portal key is one that requires a specific memory, idea, or abstract concept, the player attempting to trigger a portal must succeed on a check against the PC's Intelligence score. If the portal key is an emotion, a check vs. wisdom would be appropriate.

spell: *lightning bolt*
the heart of a storm giant

Limbo
a butterfly chrysalis
a pair of dice
a suit of jester's motley, worn inside-out
action: flip a coin
action: speak a wish (there is a 1% chance per speaker level that the wish is granted as a *limited wish;* if not granted, there's an equal chance it's reversed, then granted)
magical item: any discharge or effect from a *wand of wonder*
magical item: *girdle of femininity/masculinity*
magical item: *potion of delusion* (roll d6 for random effect: 1 potion destroyed; 2–3 potion unchanged; 4–6 potion transforms into true potion of type indicated)
spell: any wild magic spell
thought: believe a contradictory concept (ice is warm, for instance)
thought: believe any item carried is the portal key (the item is turned to chaos stuff when the portal opens)
thought: the idea of infinity

Magma
a chunk of obsidian or other glassy volcanic rock
a crucible
a hearthstone
a piece of flint
a scale from a red dragon
a stone lantern with a burning oil flame
an iron torch cresset
four drops of molten lead
melted cheese
spell: *heat metal*

Mechanus
a compass (the geometry tool)
a copper-plated helmet
a gyroscope
a handful of coins. Coins must be equal in value, of the same material, and minted by the same political unit. The number of coins must be a prime number, and unequal to the last number that was used to open this portal.
a jade serving bowl
a legal contract
a music box
a pan balance or scale
a pendulum
a scroll, tablet, or other writing surface inscribed with a geometrical proof
thought: a dodecahedron
three blind cranium rats

Mineral
a chunk of copper ore
a huge, flawless quartz crystal (500 gp value or better)
a jeweler's loupe
a razor strop
a scale from a crystal dragon
a tuning fork made of granite
an electrum needle, one foot long
magical item: *Jewel of flawlessness*
magical item: *eyes of petrifaction*
spell: *glitterdust*

Mount Celestia
a ceramic model of a ziggurat
a cinder from a dwarven forge
a flagpole ornament or finial
a platinum cone, three inches tall (value 700 gp)
a silver tiara set with seven different gemstones
action: play seven musical notes on a wind instrument
action: sprinkle holy water from a platinum aspergillum
idea: justice
magical item: *arrow of direction,* held point up
magical item: *talisman of pure good*
memory: performing an act of charity
the doorknob to a halfling's home

Negative Energy
a black glazed ceramic tile
a planar mancatcher
idea: nothingness
magical item: *vacuous grimoire*
magical item: *sphere of annihilation*
magical item: *robe of powerlessness*

scale from a shadow dragon
spell: *chill touch*
spell: *cause wounds* (any)
spell: *continual darkness*

Ooze
a glob of river silt
a leech, attached to flesh
a live eel
a pebble worn smooth in a brook or stream
a quart jug of molasses
a scale from a black dragon
a spittoon
a tin pail of earthworms
magical item: *oil of slipperiness*
the tusk of a catoblepas

Pandemonium
a bronze candelabrum of five branches, with candles unlit
a dry sponge
a stone chip from an aqueduct
action: four strokes of a stone hammer on a 1' square sheet of tin
action: scream
action: whistle with pursed lips
emotion: confusion
magical item: *medallion of thought projection*
magical item: *elixir of madness*
magical item: *drums of deafening*
spell: *audible glamer*
spell: *gust of wind*

Positive Energy
a blindfold
a convex lens
a handful of glitter
a scale from a gold dragon
a white glazed ceramic sphere
magical item: *potion of healing or extra-healing*
magical item: *potion of heroism or super-heroism*
magical item: *crystal hypnosis ball*
spell: *continual light*
spell: *cure wounds* (any)

Radiance
a glass eye (need not be worn)
a handful of tinsel
a kaleidoscope
a parasol
a scale from a mercury dragon
a triangular glass prism
six living fireflies (may be confined in a transparent container)
spell: *color spray*
spell: *pyrotechnics*
spell: *light*

Salt
a chamberpot
a crock of sauerkraut
a handful of saltpeter
a hunk of long-dry driftwood
a kidney pickled in vinegar
a pretzel
a scale from a topaz dragon
a teardrop
action: shatter a water jug
memory: thirst
needle of a cactus
the dying breath of a drowned man

Shadow
a handful of soot
a necklace formed from the wingbones of eight bats
a raccoon skin
a voluminous black cloak
action: make shadow puppets
action: pour ink over one's hands
magical item: mirror of opposition
spells: *light* and *darkness 15' radius*, cast within one round of each other

Smoke
a brick from a fireplace
a roasting spit
a scale from a steel dragon
action: blow out a candle
action: sneeze
burning incense
magical item: *elixir of fire breath*
magical item: *brazier of sleep smoke*
magical item: *dust of sneezing and choking*
spell: *pyrotechnics* (smoke version)

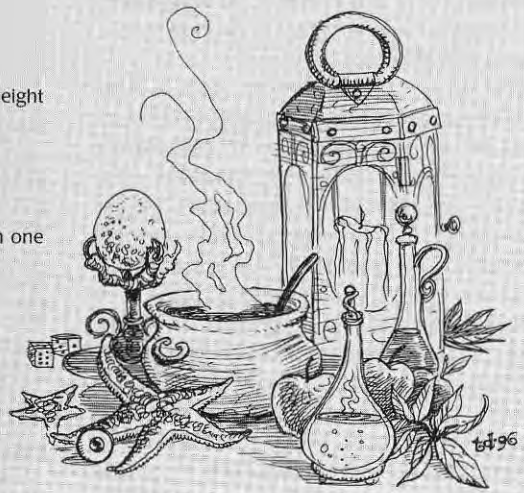
Steam
a bowl of chicken soup
a distilling retort
a drop of water from a natural (not magically created) geyser
the foundation stone from a cloud castle
a grey woolen blanket soaked in warm water
a samovar
a scale from a mist dragon
magical item: *horn of fog*
magical item: *rug of smothering*
spell: *fog cloud* or *solid fog*

Time
a pinch of sand from an hourglass
magical item: *oil of timelessness*
magical item: *potion of longevity*
magical item: *elixir of youth*
memory: a year of one's life (save vs. magic or the memory is forgotten; restoration or a wish may recover the memory)
spell: *any extension spell*
spell: *forget*
the bronze gnomon of a sundial

Vacuum
a scale from an emerald dragon
a siphon
action: hold your breath
action: sigh
action: whisper
an assassin's garotte
an empty jar
magical item: *bracers of defenselessness*
spell: *unseen servant*
spell: *silence 15' radius*

Water
a colander
a coral piece carved in the shape of a dolphin or hippocampus
a living starfish or sand dollar
a scale from an amethyst dragon
a shark tooth
a silver trident, 1' long
a strand of living seaweed
a tadpole or pollywog
action: blow on a conch shell horn
an anchor
magical item: any potion (no oils; potion changes to water)
the figurehead of a ship

Ysgard
a flagon filled to the brim with mead
a scale from a copper dragon
a scythe or sickle that has been used in a harvest
a tree branch that was felled by (natural or magical) lightning
a withered apple that dried naturally on the tree
action: arm-wrestle
action: sound a hunting horn
action: spin an axe rapidly with one's hands
an anvil of solid steel, weighing at least 100 pounds
magical item: *bag of transmuting*
magical item: *armor of rage*
memory: autumn twilight



Of course, the DM is free to impose penalties for nervousness, exhaustion, fright, or any other circumstance which would make the PC less likely to concentrate his mind. In particular, if the PC is trying to project a mental image that is unknown to him or alien to his experience, the appropriate ability is halved (round down) before circumstantial penalties are imposed. As an example, consider a tiefling PC raised in Pandemonium who wishes to recall the memory of a sunny summer day in order to open a portal to Elysium. Because this "memory" is foreign to him, the PC's Intelligence is rounded from 17 to 8. Because he is hotly pursued by a Harmonium patrol, the DM imposes a modifier of −2 to the check; because the howling winds of Pandemonium accustom natives to ignore distractions, the DM reduces that penalty to −1. The player must roll a 7 or less on 1d20 in order to open this portal.

Failure on a check indicates that the PC is unable to envision the required thought due to mental confusion or external distraction; the PC may try again after waiting one round times the square of the number by which the check failed. If a 10 is rolled for the tiefling PC, for instance, the PC must wait nine rounds (10 − 7, squared) before she would have any hope of clearing her mind enough to concentrate on the required memory.

Finally, a few portals require magical spells as their key. As a general rule, only common, low-level spells are required. The spell is cast into the opening of the portal from a distance within the spell's listed range; the caster must stand within the portal's opening if the range is given as "0" or "touch." Of course, a spellcaster directing a *lightning bolt* spell at a portal from an extreme range may not be able to run into the portal during the brief period it remains open. If the spell is the right one, the magic is absorbed, and the portal opens; if the spell is wrong, however, the normal magical effects accrue. It is perfectly acceptable to substitute spells from scrolls or even discharges from magical items if these would precisely duplicate the required spell. As an optional rule, DMs should allow a *wish* to open any portal, regardless of the key normally required. Even then, however, *wishes* cannot overcome the barrier that the Lady of Pain creates to prevent certain entities from entering Sigil.

Using the random portal key tables

A selection of random tables has been provided for DMs to use as inspiration in creating portals for their PLANESCAPE campaigns. These tables are meant to suggest a variety of keys and portal locations which can be used for interdimensional travel. Using these tables, the DM can develop a list of portals and their respective keys which will be unique to a particular campaign, as well as generate portal data "on the fly," when players head off in unexpected directions. The canny DM will not bind himself too closely to these tables, however, but will substitute alternatives to the random rolls when inspiration strikes.

Table A should be used for a random selection of buildings within Sigil. To use the table, roll 3d10 to generate a number between 1 and 1,000. The parenthetical information following each item on the table indicates the ward in which the building is located, and may give page references to where the site is mentioned in *Sigil and Beyond* (SB) from the PLANESCAPE boxed set, *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil* (ITC), *Uncaged: Faces of Sigil* (UFS), or *The Factol's Manifesto* (FM). A number of "generic" entries, noted on the table with asterisks, allow the DM to prepare a building that has not been detailed in PLANESCAPE supplements or adventures.

Table B uses a d6 roll to suggest a random location for a portal within or on a structure. Of course, the DM will wish to modify the result as needed to conform to the physical layout of the building chosen.

Outland locations may be chosen on Table C, which uses a standard percentile roll to generate random realms and regions. The DM may wish to designate a specific building or structure within that realm for the portal, of course. As with Table A, a few of the random rolls will produce results which may be customized to the specific campaign; for example, a "settlement" roll of 63–69 can signify anything from a single farmhouse to a flourishing Outland city not currently detailed in any of the reference works. Background information on Outland locations is available in both *Sigil and Beyond* and *A Player's Guide to the Outlands*, as well as in a number of adventure modules.

Table D consists of possible portal keys for many of the planes of existence. Sample word or phrase portal keys are not included, since the PLANESCAPE expansion sets and sourcebooks provide a wealth of suitable realm and power names that can serve this function. Only magical items listed in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* have been used. The plane-specific tables reflect the likely popularity of the plane as a destination, with more choices for the elemental and outer planes than for demiplanes.

A few notes are relevant to using these portal keys. The DM must remember, as has been noted several times already, that a keyed portal must lead to a precisely determined location: not merely to "the Abyss," but to a specific doorway (or similar threshold) within a specific realm of a specific layer of the Abyss. In some cases, the nature of the key will suggest an appropriate destination. For example, a length of heavy iron chain could lead to anywhere in Baator, but the obvious destination is the city of Jangling Hiter in Minauros. In accordance with the principle of singularity, DMs should be reluctant to use any specific key more than once.

Finally, Table E covers general keys, which would be appropriate for portals connecting Sigil to the Outlands or to the Prime Material Plane. Of course, general keys may occasionally be used for connections to more esoteric destinations, too. For random selection of numbers in the range 1–200 for this table, roll a d6 along with percentile dice; an odd number on the d6 indicates that one hundred is added to the percentile roll to get the final sum.

Let's look at a few examples of how the tables can be used. Leslie is bored by the challenges facing Lucius, her 4th-level paladin character, on the prime-plane world of Toril, and she suggests to her DM that trying PLANESCAPE adventures might be exciting. The next gaming session begins with Lucius traveling through unfamiliar woodlands near his home, looking for a pleasant picnic spot. He finds an ancient, rune-covered dolmen, possibly, he thinks, an ancient druidic site. After detecting no evil in the vicinity, he steps forward to investigate. As he passes through the archway, an interplanar portal is triggered by the hard-boiled egg Lucius has prepared for his lunch (Table E, roll 30). The portal destroys the egg, but Lucius will never realize that item was the portal key. With a flash of light and a crackle of released magical energy, Lucius emerges from the tiny henhouse (Table B, roll 5) behind Hundrake's Poultry Shop, located in Sigil's Market Ward (Table A, roll 801). Fortunately, it's not long before a kindly factotum from the Fraternity of Order encounters the dazed paladin wandering the streets of Sigil and helps the clueless berk find temporary lodgings.

By the time he reaches seventh level, Lucius has a basic understanding of how portals work, and has been on a few planar exploits of his own. He is recruited to accompany some of his NPC friends on a raiding expedition secretly organized by an aasimar factor of the Hardheads. The tricky part is smuggling the party to the portal location, deep within the catacombs under the Mortuary (Table A, roll 526), but the group has a sketchy map to the appropriate doorway, and the portal key – a shroud – is readily available (Table D, Gray Waste, roll 4). The portal delivers the party to a mausoleum vault on Culwhych, one of the islands in Arawn's realm of Annwn. The group sneaks to the cave lair of a night hag and seize a great prize: an iron flask containing a deva's spirit. They quickly return to the two-way portal and use the same shroud to return to Sigil.

Lucius has heard a number of rumors suggesting that a holy sword was lost decades earlier on the quasi-elemental plane of Ash, and upon reaching tenth level he decides to seek the weapon for himself. He asks his Harmonium contacts for the location and key for a portal to that plane. The answer, which arrives a few days later, is disappointing: nobody in the faction knows of a portal to Ash which is reliable and accessible at this time. But the Hardheads can provide him with roundabout transportation to a spot on the plane of Fire near the border to Ash, if Lucius is willing to undertake a risky trek across planar boundaries.

An amethyst signet ring (Table E, roll 23) is the key Lucius uses to trigger a portal at the main entrance to the offices of the Stone and Cog construction company (Table A, roll 848; Table B, roll 1). He emerges from a small closet in a residential hall deep within the Dwarven Mountain on the Outlands (Table C, roll 19; Table C, roll 3). The Harmonium has thoughtfully provided a dwarven NPC to conduct Lucius on the next leg of his journey. The pair follow a twisty path through little-used passages until they arrive at the forges deep below Soot Hall. Lucius thanks the dwarf for his aid, swallows a

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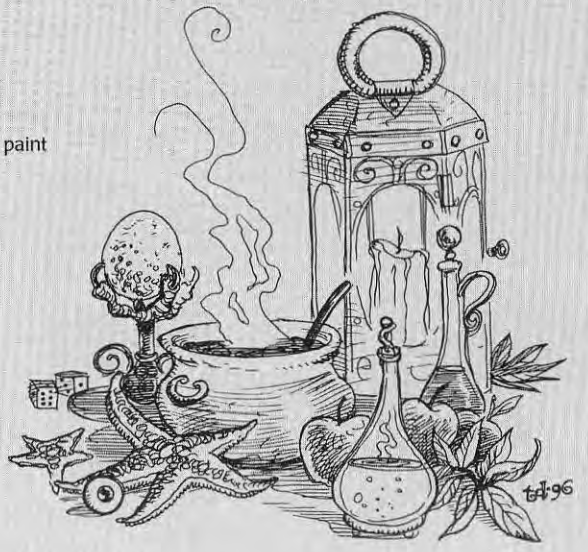
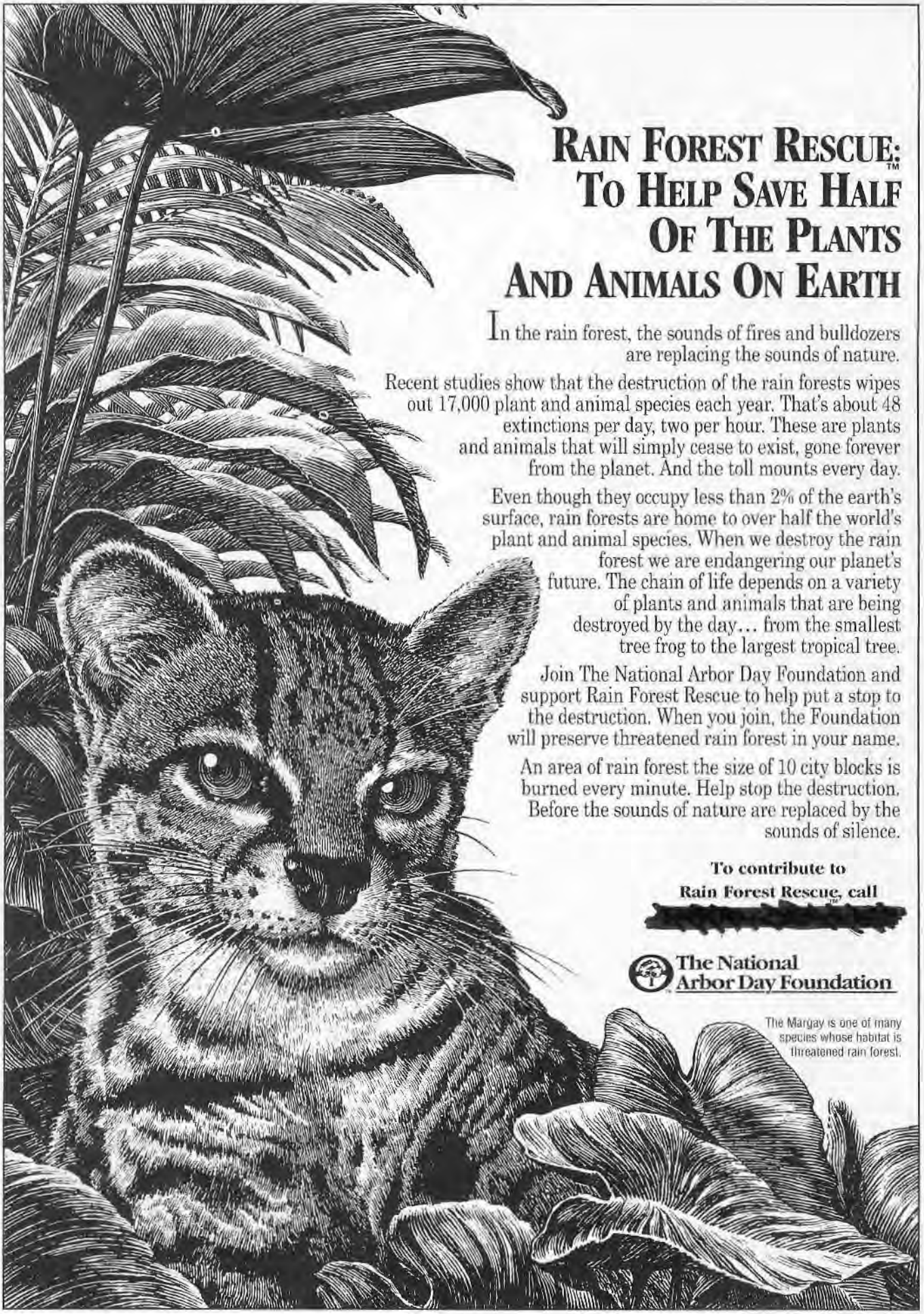
Table E: General Portal Keys

accountant's ledger
action: apply rosin to a fiddle bow
action: belch
action: bite one's thumb
action: blow on a dandelion seed-head
action: bow or curtsy
action: crack a whip
action: crack an egg
action: dip a quill pen in golden ink
action: eat a clove of garlic
action: genuflect
action: grimace
action: kiss
action: laugh
action: light a yellow candle
action: somersault
action: speak with a lisp
action: spill a handful of iron filings and gather them with a lodestone
action: swing a dead cat by its tail
action: sword-swallowing
action: tickle another
aloe leaf
amethyst signet ring
aspergillum filled with rosewater (1 oz.)
ballista bolt
billiard ball
black leather eyepatch
block and tackle
bodkin
boiled egg
boomerang
bowl of lentil porridge
brass door hinge
broken harp string
bronze door-knocker
butcher's apron
cake of scented soap
cane or walking-stick
ceramic piggy-bank
chef's toque
chisel
chunk of amber
container of green slime
corkscrew
crutch
cube of granite
cup of rancid butter
dark-blue lacquered wooden box
deed to property
diaper
domino mask
dressmaker's dummy wearing a kimono
dried cranberry
dried fig
eiderdown pillow
eleven nails from a coffin
emotion: courage
emotion: cowardice
emotion: defiance
emotion: embarrassment
emotion: gratitude
emotion: shame
emotion: grief
fang from a poisonous serpent
feather duster covered in cream
female marionette
fingerbones of a zombie
fishing pole
five platinum marbles
flatiron
forked stick or divining rod
fossil
four wooden pegs
four-foot length of freshly-cut bamboo
garlic press
giant's jawbone
golden thimble
green mosaic stone
grey satin dancing slipper
guillotine blade
handful of crabgrass
handful of dry oatmeal
handful of dung
handful of millet
haunch of roast lamb
heart of a tax collector
iron awl
ivory skull the size of a chickpea
ivory peg-leg
jack o' lantern
jar of pickled watermelon rind
jelly doughnut
lace teapot cozy
large, pink umbrella, unfurled
lime
loaf of freshly-baked bread
love letter
maggot
magical item: *rope of constriction*
magical item: *chime of hunger*
magical item: *bag of devouring*
magical item: *helm of opposite alignment*
magical item: *hat of stupidity*
magical item: *robe of vermin*
magical item: *broom of animated attack*
magical item: *gauntlets of fumbling*
magical item: *pipes of pain*
magical item: any rod, staff, or wand with only one charge remaining
magnifying lens
marzipan duck
megaphone
memory: a dream of flying
memory: a rainbow
memory: temptation
memory: dizziness
message in a bottle
metal spring
miniature sandstone obelisk, 3' tall
mouthful of pulverized eggshells
nutcracker
oar from a rowboat
octopus' tentacle
orange silk scarf or cravat
pair of chopsticks
pair of electrum spurs
pair of false eyelashes
pair of snowshoes
pair of stilts
palm leaf
pawnbroker's sign
pewter mug filled with vermilion paint
pewter ladle
piece of fruit held in silver tongs
pinch of dust from a crypt
pint flask of hardened glue
pint flask of liniment
pitchfork
podium
pomander ball
porcupine quill
rabbit's foot
rag doll
razor
red smoked herring
red carpet
ribbon of sleighbells
rotating wheel
sandbag
scarecrow
set of quoits
set of iron fetters
shamrock
ship's belaying-pin
silver spoon
silver hand-mirror
single grain of sand
six drops of river water
skeleton key made of bone
small pot of marmalade
small vial of lavender scented bath oil
spell: *hold portal*
spell: *knock*
spell: *Leomund's trap*
spell: *Nystul's magic aura*
spigot
stale crust of bread
stewpot of a cannibal
stone calendar
string from a psaltery or lyre
strip of flypaper
stuffed owl
tail stinger of a scorpion
tailor's pincushion
tambourine
tapestry stained with blood
thirty-gallon cauldron of coleslaw
thought: unconsciousness
three linden leaves
tin tiara or coronet
toadstool
tomahawk coated with butter
tombstone coated in olive oil
trowel
turnip
two hairs from the beard of a prophet
ugly duckling
unfletched arrow
unicorn's horn
unmated left-hand glove
unraveled turban
washboard
weathervane
well winch
wheelbarrow filled with suet
whetstone
widow's veil
wig
wood carving of a squirrel
wooden butter-churn
wreath of evergreen branches



potion of fire resistance, and leaps headlong into the mouth of the third furnace from the left. The glassblower's pipette (Table D, Fire, roll 5) stowed away in Lucius' backpack triggers the portal effect, and the paladin emerges on the Plane of Fire, under a flaming trellis in an efreeti garden. Of course, the paladin now faces the really hard part of his quest; portals are merely a means of getting to where the true adventures happen. And that, ultimately, is the lesson to learn here: careful use of portals and keys can add a distinctive quality to a campaign, but the manipulation of game mechanics shouldn't become an end in itself.

John R. Prager works as a hotel night manager and is active in interscholastic competitive speech and debate.



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BIRTHRIGHT® Campaign

by Carrie A. Bebris

Cerilia's oldest stories tell of days when elves reigned over the forests, dwarves ruled the mountains, and gods walked the earth. Few remember these tales. Fewer still remember the time of which they speak, for when the Shadow came to Cerilia, the continent was forever altered.

About 2,000 years ago, several races of humans first arrived in Cerilia. They fled the evil god of Shadow, Azrai. He pursued. Eventually all Cerilia became involved in a war between good and evil – a war so great that the other gods took physical form to defeat their evil counterpart. The divine war resulted in a cataclysmic explosion that destroyed all the gods and the mountain they stood upon.

The force of the explosion scattered the essences of the gods over the battlefield. The gods' human champions, who had stood bravely at their sides during the great battle, received most of the power, enough to make them gods in their own right. The rest of the essence fell upon others at the battle site. Those heroes gained divine bloodlines that grant them and their descendants special powers, known as blood abilities. Those whose bloodline derives from Azrai's essence are called the awnsheghlien (awn-SHAY-lin), cursed beings whose physical forms become corrupted by the use of their blood abilities.

Blooded individuals (including awnsheghlien) also inherit a mystical bond with the land. It is this bond that enables them to become regents, rulers of the land, its resources, and its people. One of these regents, Roele, built a great empire that spanned most of the continent, and ruled it from the Iron Throne. The empire survived nearly a thousand years before collapsing into civil war when the last emperor died without an heir. Now, five centuries later, the land's kings, queens, counts, duchesses, emirs, and jarls – not to mention the awnsheghlien – still plot and battle for the right to the Iron Throne. Throughout the continent, many harbor a not-so-secret hope that a new great leader will emerge from the fray to lead Cerilia into a second age of glory.

This is the BIRTHRIGHT® setting: a place where everyone from the mightiest queen to the lowliest peasant is somehow affected by the quest for empire. Player characters, whether unblooded commoners, scions poised to inherit, or powerful regents, cannot help but feel the ebb and flow of political tides – and may even control them.

When Roele formed his mighty empire, he began in the southwestern corner, in the region called Anuire. So too did players when they began their own exploration of the continent (BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting). Following Roele's path of conquest, players next discovered the people and land of Khinasi (*Cities of the Sun*).

Now, adventurers are moving their campaigns north to a region of thick taiga forests, snow-covered tundra plains, and a hardy Viking-like human culture that calls itself the Rjurik (*The Rjurik Highlands*). They have also encountered the Brechts (*Havens of the Great Bay*), a mercantile people whose society is dominated by trade and whose trade is dominated by the Krakennauricht – the great bay which lies in the center of Cerilia. The Brechts have introduced players to a new character subclass – the guilder – and new trade innovations.

Soon, PCs can explore the only region of Cerilia that Emperor Roele could not conquer: Vosgaard (*Tribes of the Heartless Wastes*). Only experienced, proven heroes dare brave this unforgiving land governed by brutal war chieftains and equally cold war priests.

And in all of these regions, noble adventurers battle countless dangers to create places for themselves in history (*Legends of the Hero-Kings*).

Geographic locations are not the only things PCs are exploring. Wizards and magicians examined Cerilia's unique magical system of sources, ley lines, mebhaighl, realm magic, and battle spells (*The Book of Magecraft*). Not to be outdone, other types of characters can soon master the finer points of rulership. Priests can develop new spells, tactics, and a deeper understanding of their faiths and responsibilities (*The Book of Priestcraft*).

As characters move from exploring the continent to exploring their power over it, nations will rise and fall. PCs may inherit the thrones of existing realms (*Hogunmark*) or adventure to carve a new domain for themselves out of the wilderness (*King of the Giantdowns*). Either way, their actions will resonate in the land itself. In Cerilia, a king may conquer by might of arms, but he rules by right of the gods.

Carrie A. Bebris has edited BIRTHRIGHT products since coming to TSR nearly two years ago. She would like to use this space to plug her first design project, the Hogunmark *domain sourcebook.*

DAY

Guilds of Cerilia

They're not just for thieving anymore

by Ed Stark

illustrated by David Day

Gold clinks against silver. Gems shine in the moonlight as one hand passes them stealthily to another. An almost inaudible grunt breaks the near-silence of the darkness as one man stoops and lifts a chest. He makes to hand it to the other figure when light flares all around him. With a gasp, he drops his heavy burden. The other man shouts in alarm and tries to run. Crossbows twang and he lurches, cries out in pain, then crumples, having gone only a few steps. His former companion, arms well away from his body, reaches for the night sky. The surrounding figures, bearing lanterns and weapons, move in. One grasps the man by the shoulders, forcing him to his knees. Another grabs the man's hands, brutally twisting them behind his back. A whimper escapes the prisoner as he is hog-tied and cast upon his face.

One lantern-bearer examines the fallen, bolt-ridden man. Another steps up, prods the body with a foot.

"He's dead." It is a statement, empty of remorse or pity.

"Yes," the other agrees. Behind them, the living prisoner is hefted onto a pole, his body suspended by his bound legs and arms. "So end all thieves in Freeport."

Is it any wonder that many thieves try more legitimate activities? Many join adventuring parties. There, they have the protection of a few fighters, the support of a wizard, perhaps, and maybe even a cleric to heal those occasional wounds. They don't get to practice most of their skills, of course – most adventuring parties consider thieves merely portable, living keys. "Check for traps, thief," they say. "And open the lock while you're at it. We'll stand back ... just in case."

It is a thankless profession. Why, they watch you so closely you can't even pocket a few treasures from that measly chest you risked your life to open. No, everything has to be divided up, "fair and square." Someday, you're going to find a trap and leave it for that pushy fighter, or the "brilliant" wizard. At least the cleric has a reason for acting "holier than thou." Still, he gets on your nerves with his constant preaching, doesn't he?

Well, why not put an end to it? Get your own back, and a little bit more. Command power and respect. Have those fighters begging at your door for scraps, and watch the erstwhile wizard perform tricks for his supper. Heck, even the cleric will come begging for tithes, someday. A nice dream, isn't it?

Well, it doesn't have to be a dream. You, a "lowly" thief, can have all this power and more! Where, you ask? How?

Go to Cerilia, young thief! Go to the BIRTHRIGHT® setting! Treasures and respect abound, yours for the taking, at relatively little risk.

Relatively little.

Guildmasters to the world

On Cerilia, thieves have it made. We've taken the thieves' guild to its next logical extension. Sure, some of us keep operating in the shadows, cutting the occasional purse or climbing in the unprotected window, but those are the small fry. All you need is to join the right guild, and you're set for life.

Let me rephrase that. Your life expectancy suddenly becomes a lot longer, and you can start at the top of the heap. All you need is a bloodline and some smarts. My friend, el-Hadid, had both. He just needed an angle.

The rise of the tradesman

Sure, you can run a "standard" thieves guild. That Khinasi, el-Hadid, started out that way. But he learned quick and expanded his guild. When he moved to Anuire, he started out with a little gold, some spices, and a dream. He built up an organization of thieves in no time, under cover of legitimate trade. Now, he controls one of the most powerful guilds in Anuire – and it probably does more legitimate business than illegal. Still, he keeps his hand in.

A Khinasi by birth, el-Hadid came to Anuire, about twelve, or thirteen years ago. He'd mortgaged everything he had to buy spices and silks to sell in western Anuire (where their knowledge of spices just barely covers salt, and silk was something the Spider wove into webs). He made a few friends, spreading the wealth around, and got some support. Next thing you know, he's running a little guild in Ilien, under the protection of the crown.

The canny Khinasi then began to point out some advantages he could provide for Rogr Aglondier, ruler of Ilien. While Rogr was a wizard, and a pretty good one, el-Hadid saw that the Count's information and trade network was pretty much nil. In exchange for a little political support, el-Hadid "volunteered" to correct that. He set up holdings in Roesone, Diemed, and Medoere, ostensibly to establish trade contacts inland, but really to extend his sphere of influence. For a while, he and the Count worked together, making el-Hadid strong and the Count knowledgeable.

Eventually, the Count and el-Hadid experienced some disagreements and they broke off any official friendship. Some say the Count disapproved of the Khinasi's manner of dealing with competitors, but I say it was just a little falling out. Anyway, Rogr found he couldn't get rid of el-Hadid (not that he necessarily wanted to, of course), so he left him alone. Now, the Khinasi tradesmen is one of the most powerful people in all of souther Anuire.

Playing the market

On Cerilia, five distinct human cultures live in fairly close proximity to each other. Their guilds often trade with each other, providing special "trademark" goods or services other cultures value. Here are some examples of "trademark" goods and services from each human culture.

Culture	Trademark goods	Trademark services
Anuirean	Metalworks, agricultural goods	Mercenaries, priestly magic
Brechtür	Gems, precious metals, ships	Shipping, banking, distribution
Khinasi	Silks, semi-tropical fruits	Wizardly magic, southern shipping
Rjurik	Lumber, furs, fish	Mercenary companies, woodcrafters
Vos	Minerals, looted treasure	Mercenary armies

Let those brutish fighters mock him.

How you can do it too

Establishing a trade guild isn't hard. Finding a place to do it may be. On Cerilia, there are still many open markets, even in well-settled Anuire. However, if you just plop down in the middle of someone else's territory, you could be in for a way. Location is key.

Good merchandise helps. If you have something to sell, whether it be services (most thieves' guilds sell this), goods (especially from faraway lands or other sources not open to your competitors), information (more dangerous, but often worth the risk), or a combination of all three, you can often write your own ticket. Merchandise is key.

Friends can be an asset as well. If you're an adventuring thief, talking some of your companions into helping out (make them think you're trying to go legitimate) can be a big asset. Otherwise, contact powerful NPCs who you can offer "great, introductory deals" if they "get in on the ground floor." If they also happen to be enemies of your potential competitors, that helps. Friends are key.

You get the point: There are lots of keys to setting up a successful guild. The most important one is to be versatile. Roll with the punches, and always have more than one plan. Look at my pal, el-Hadid, again. He set up his guild based on three things: exotic trade goods, his friendship with the Count of Ilien, and his ability to provide services and information to people who could help him. If he'd gone into the cutthroat (literally) market of Anuire's southern coast, they'd have carved him up (again, literally). But, with a three-pronged attack, he proved nearly unstoppable.

Ply trade

The domain (character) action ply trade allows PC to use their skills and abilities to gain small amounts of gold as a domain action. Guildmasters who use ply trade can perform a special version of this action, depending on how much they are willing to risk. These tables should be used to encourage further adventuring, however, not replace it.

No risk

Use existing ply trade rules

Moderate risk

1d20*	Result
1–5	Failure! PC caught performing illegal/dangerous activities. Lose 1d3 GB to "get out of trouble."
6–19	Success. Character gains 1d3 GB, usually in the form of some rare item or treasure the character acquired (or stole).
20+	Spectacular success! PC gains 1d3 GB, as above, but item has "special" abilities/history that should lead to further discoveries, treasures, or adventure.

Extreme risk

1d20*	Result
1–5	Extreme failure! PC loses 1d6 GB and 1d6 RP immediately, and may be in serious trouble (DM's option)
6–10	Failure! As "Failure," above.
11–19	Success. As "Success" above, but the PC gains 1d6 GB.
20+	Spectacular success! PC gains 1d6 GB, as above, and may have acquired several magical or special items, or one very import91ant item that should lead to additional adventures.

*PC may add one-third of his current level to the die roll (round down)

Once you're going ...

Expand! Build new guild houses and create trade routes. Even if you have to keep yourself a pauper, do it fast and mean it! Don't sit back and wait for your enemies to react; go after them. Or, more accurately, go after neutral territory. Don't get into a direct conflict if you can help it (you might even act intimidated if someone tells you to back off – you can get them later) and use those "natural abilities" of yours (you know: thieves' skills) to make the most of your situation.

After a very short time, and a few successes, you'll prove yourself indispensable to those around you. Grease the right palms (especially the local law, temple, and wizard representatives) regularly, and they'll wonder how they ever got along without you. Again, don't worry about squirreling away the profits yet; keep enough to defend yourself against takeovers, but use your new authority to build friends and influence enemies.

Where have I heard that before?

Now you're on top

Once you reach the pinnacle, you'll find the only ceiling is a glass one, and glass shatters. You may fully develop your influence in one particular area, but you can then start to expand into others. Take out any competitors who give you problems, and try to buy out or absorb those who stayed neutral.

Reward your friends! Too many successful guildmasters forget that those around them will envy their success. It doesn't hurt to pay someone back for an old favor several times over – even el-Hadid has forgotten that. The proof is that I'm telling you his secrets instead of keeping them to myself. Guess he should've given me that loan.

And, outside of Cerilia

Though few AD&D® settings are as friendly to thieves or PC-controlled guilds as Cerilia, they can be. If you're a thief, trapped on some world where you're forced to dodge the law or rely on the strength of others in your adventuring party (ugh!), don't despair. Squirrel away some of that cash you earn, and maybe even a few magical items, and open up a shop someday. Nothing too imposing; just a little storefront shop. You can man it yourself between adventures, and hire someone trustworthy (Okay, I know, you trust nobody – figure something out!) to man it while you're away. Sell things you gain on adventures, and maybe engage in a little moonlight laundry for other thieves (just don't get caught). Remember, you're probably providing goods and services the yokels even in the biggest cities haven't seen before (how many of them have pilfered a dragon's lair?), so you can command a good price.

Spread the profits around. Contribute to the local government, pay dues to the merchants' guilds. You might even make friends with a wizard or two, just in case they come in handy. If you can swing it, start attending the local temple regularly, and leave something in the offertory. Soon, they'll be calling you a "fine, upstanding citizen" right from the pulpit.

And the most important thing: make sure you put a little something in the city guard's retirement fund. After all, you need them to protect your honest business from all those disreputable *thieves*

Ed Stark came to TSR early in 1995 and has been designing BIRTHRIGHT *adventures and game accessories ever since. His current TSR credits include* Legends of the Hero-Kings *and* Havens of the Great Bay, *as well as several* DRAGON® Magazine *articles.*

Setting

introduction by Bill Slavicsek

Life has never been easy beneath the crimson sun of Athas, but it wasn't always this cruel, either. Since the death of the Dragon and the birth of the Cerulean Storm, the harsh reality of the burning wastes has been dulled by a new sense of hope and a certain madness of optimism that has spread like sand boils through many of the city-states. How could the people be expected to restrain their joy when sorcerer-kings have fallen, slaves have found freedom, and water bursts from the sky at the amazing rate of two to three times a year in many places?

Don't let the song of freedom or the rain of hope fool you, however. Athas is still a world of savage adventure and swift, gruesome death. It's a world where there are no true gods, where magical energy must be drawn from the living environment, and where death takes many forms – thirst, hunger, heat, wild beast, savage raider, destructive storms, inhuman monsters. Beyond these common threats, Athas itself is dying. Defilers – wizards who plunder the living energy of the world without regard for the destruction they cause – have left Athas a primal, barren landscape where life must constantly struggle to survive.

Fire and sand, blood and dust. This is the DARK SUN® setting.

Wizardly magic, a universal feature of every AD&D® setting, is a ravenous beast roaming the Athasian wastelands. Unless it is used wisely, magic devours the life of the land, leaving behind withered vegetation and lifeless ash. Wizards are feared and hated in most regions, and only recently has a city-state given preservers – wizards who draw energy slowly so as not to ravage the land – citizenship and made them welcome.

Psionics, an optional game mechanic in most settings, is a central component of the DARK SUN campaign. Every living thing has a chance to be at least a psionic wild talent, and many follow the Will and the Way of the true psionicist.

Clerical magic beneath the crimson sun isn't tied to gods but to the elements of earth, air, fire, and water. By making pacts with these elements and the beings of the elemental planes, clerics receive the power to cast their spells.

The DARK SUN campaign is an ever-changing setting. This is best reflected in the unfolding story that has moved a decade into the future (*DARK SUN Expanded and Revised Campaign Setting*). Now, as Free Year 11 opens for the Free City of Tyr, new challenges and new opportunities rise out of the ruins of the previous decade. The Dragon is dead. Three sorcerer-kings were killed or are missing. New city-states have been found to the north. And in the east, raging over the Silt Sea, the Cerulean Storm boils with lightning, thunder, and torrential rain.

The Wanderer, that mysterious and oft-quoted sage of the wastes, has broken a decade of silence to reveal the secret history of the world and provide the first glimpses of places beyond the Tyr Region. His writing hints of an empire of civilized kreen bent on enslaving all nonkreen races, of lands of black glass where undead kings rule over undead kingdoms, and of bandit nations that hold sway over the deserts of the north. His chronicles also delve into greater detail about some of these locations. One tells of a natural boundary that separates the Tablelands from the savannas to the west (*The Wanderer's Chronicle: Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs*). Here, amid miles-high cliffs and an obscuring mist, live tribes of civilized halflings. With flying ships, living tools and weapons, and little knowledge of what lies beyond their cliffside villages, these halflings bear almost no resemblance to their cousins among the Forest Ridge. Another collection of the Wanderer's writings reveals a place out of time (*The Wanderer's Chronicle: Mind Lords of the Last Sea*). In a valley far to the north of Tyr, an ancient city and its people still live on the shores of a great body of water, ruled over by the triune council of psionicists who have protected them for more than 2,000 years – the Mind Lords.

The past year also saw new revelations regarding the wizards of Athas (*Defilers and Preservers: The Wizards of Athas*). Secrets concerning the two types of Athasian wizards came to light, including new spells, hidden knowledge of the mysterious planes known as the Black and the Gray, and details on the mage variations that have arisen in recent days – including the cerulean, the necromancer, and the shadow wizard. Perhaps the most striking news came from the psionicists of Athas. Mighty psionic items were unearthed that could tip the balance of power for all time (*Psionic Artifacts of Athas*). Not only were legends and secrets of these psionic artifacts revealed, but a new class of item was discovered – living artifacts.

What does the future hold for Athas? First, online support of the setting shifts into high gear as the next Wanderer's Chronicle appears as an online product exclusive. For just the usual service costs, you'll be able to download *Secrets of the Dead Lands*. Among other articles and adventures, the DARK SUN psionics rules are in for an update, and the year culminates in the massive *Dregoth Ascending* adventure.

Now, more than ever, Athas needs heroes. If the prospects for a better world are to be realized, then human, elf, dwarf, and mul must come together, free citizen and slave alike, to battle for Athas's survival.

Bill Slavicsek designed the revised DARK SUN boxed set and is busy putting the finishing touches on a new line of products for TSR.

Heroes of Athas

Skills & Powers for DARK SUN® setting PCs

by Ed Bonny

The *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Skills & Powers* rules brought to AD&D® campaigns a revolutionary way of customizing character creation. Players are no longer limited to PCs whose abilities match others of the same race and class. These new options fit seamlessly with fantasy worlds like the FORGOTTEN REALMS® or the GREYHAWK® settings. Because of unique races like muls and half-giants, however, they cannot be directly imported to the DARK SUN® campaign. This problem also applies to Athas's unique classes, like the gladiator and defiler, which have no counterparts in other campaigns.

Players creating PCs using this article should have a copy of the *Player's Handbook* (*PHB*), the DARK SUN revised campaign setting – containing the *Age of Heroes* (*AoH*) DARK SUN rulebook and *The Way of the Psionicist* (*WotP*) reference – and the *PLAYERS OPTION: Skills & Powers* book (*S&P*).

1. Character points

The idea of Character Points (CPs) as the primary step in character creation was first introduced in the *S&P* rules book. Rather than play a standard, rigidly defined PC as given in the *PHB*, each player has a specified number of points to customize his character. The number of CPs allotted for each character depends on the PC's race and class. The expenditure of CPs comes into play when a player pays for racial options, class options, and proficiencies. CPs can also be used in other ways, such as to acquire a new spell, re-roll a missed attack, or grant a second save. For a full list of ways in which to spend CPs, see chapter 1 of *S&P*.

DARK SUN PCs are created using one of six possible methods listed in *AoH*. After a PC has been created, the player selects a background to flesh out the PC's history from one of the generic choices listed in *S&P*, or the player can create a history uniquely tailored to the savage life on Athas.

All PCs using character points receive 3–5 CPs when they reach a new level, starting with the second. Since all DARK SUN characters start the game at 3rd level, extra CPs have already been incorporated into character creation, meaning that the character points a DARK SUN PC would have received at second and third levels have been worked into the character creation process. At any stage of character creation, only 10 points can be retained for use later in the character creation process. Abilities cost 5, 10, 15, or 20 CPs.

2. Ability scores

Once ability scores have been assigned, the player selects the PC's race. After the selection of a race, the player then modifies the PC's ability scores using Table IV: Racial Ability Adjustment, in *AoH*.

Table 1: Character Point allotment by race

Race	CP Allotment
Aarakocra	30
Dray	50
Dwarf	30
Elf	55
Half-Elf	35
Half-Giant	25
Halfling	35
Human	15
Mul	30
Pterran	25
Thri-Kreen	45

As detailed in *S&P*, a PC's ability scores may be split into their appropriate sub-abilities. Players exercising this option for their PCs can increase one sub-ability at the expense of diminishing the other. For each ability score, there can be no more than 4 points difference between the two sub-ability scores. In campaigns using the new DARK SUN tables for Strength and Constitution, players can assign Muscle/Stamina (Strength) and Fitness/Health (Constitution) sub-ability scores by modifying those tables found in *AoH* according to the *S&P* format. Given that Athasian PCs on average possess very high ability scores, it is recommended that sub-ability scores do not exceed racial maximums. **Note:** Some options offer a point increase to one sub-ability score. PCs taking such options are allowed a 5–6 point difference in sub-ability scores.

3. Racial requirements

All PCs are provided with a specified number of character points dependent on their race. These points can be spent to customize a PC from the general skill list provided for each race, or they can be used to purchase the race's standard skill package. Detailed information on all PC races excluding the dray can be found in the revised DARK SUN campaign setting. Information on the dray as a PC race is provided in the *City by the Silt Sea* accessory.

Aarakocra

Racial penalties

Bludgeoning damage: Aarakocra have light and fragile bones that allow them to fly but make them extremely vulnerable to bludgeoning weapons. Aarakocra suffer an additional 1d4 hp damage from bludgeoning weapons.

Enclosed fighting disadvantage: When forced to fight in an enclosed area (any area where aarakocra can't spread their wings and fly), aarakocra receive a −2 penalty to attack rolls.

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Javelin bonus, tough hide, talon attack

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Aim/Dexterity subability score.

Beak attack (5): The PC can attack with his beak for 1d2 hp damage. An aarakocra combining this option with the talon attack option can make three attacks per round (2 claws/1 beak attack).

Defiler sense (5): The PC character can automatically sense defilers within a 20′ radius. This is an instinctual reaction deriving from the aarakocras' historically close association with nature, preserving magic, and the avangion Oronis. Defilers may prevent detection with magical spells.

Dexterous flying (5): The PC is extremely adept at flying and possesses a maneuverability class of B.

Javelin bonus (5): When using a javelin, aarakocra can make a special diving attack with a +4 bonus to attack and double damage. The aarakocra must be proficient in the use of a javelin to use this bonus.

Movement bonus (5): The PC has an increased movement rate of 9 rather than 6 on ground.

Net bonus (5): The PC can create weighted nets for use in aerial combat to drop on opponents with a +1 attack bonus. A successful hit entangles one opponent who cannot engage in combat. Most flying opponents who use their wings that are hit by a net can no longer fly and fall to the ground. A successful Strength check frees an opponent from a net.

Sharper talons (5): The PC's talons are sharper than usual and cause 1d4 hp damage. The character must have talon attack to choose this option.

Talon attack (5): The PC can use his talons in combat, thus allowing two claw attacks per round with no proficiency penalty. A successful attack causes 1d3 hp damage per claw.

Tough hide (10): The PC has a natural AC of 7 due to toughened skin and rigid feather lining.

Dray

Racial penalties

Cold vulnerability: Both first- and second-generation dray are extremely vulnerable to cold-based attacks, suffering double damage from such attacks.

Bright light vulnerability: Both generations of dray receive a −2 to attack rolls when fighting in areas of bright light such as sunlight.

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Attack bonus, heat resistance, infravision, natural weapons, tough hide

Attack bonus (5): First-generation dray who select this option receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls when using their natural weapons. First-generation dray must also select Natural Weapons to gain this attack bonus. Second-generation dray receive a +1 attack bonus when using dray-crafted weapons.

Breath weapon (10): Twice per day, the PC can breath out a searing blast of super-heated sand (10′ cone) causing 2d8+4 hp damage.

Double mutations (5): The first-generation dray was born with more than one mutation. The PC may roll for an additional mutation on the mutation table.

Dregoth's blessing (10): On extremely rare occasions, Dregoth bestows his special blessing on a newborn second-generation dray. The character is permanently *blessed* as per the priest spell.

Heat resistance (10): The PC has a powerful resistance to heat and fire. Against all forms of fire and heat attacks, the PC suffers only half damage if he fails a saving throw. The PC suffers no damage on a successful saving throw.

Infravision (10): First-generation dray receive infravision up to 60′. Second-generation dray have infravision to 30′.

Mask body heat (5): Drawing on its cold-blooded reptilian nature, the dray can at will mask his body heat to match any background heat, thus rendering him invisible to infravision.

Muscle bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Muscle/Strength subability score.

Natural weapons (5): The PC may attack with both natural claws and a bite once per round. A bite causes 1d4 hp damage, while each claw inflicts 1d6.

Prehensile tail (5): The first-generation dray PC can use his tail to pick up and carry small items weighing up to two pounds. If this option is taken with the tail swipe option, the dray's tail can wield weapons of size S with a THAC0 penalty of −2.

Regeneration (10): The dray has an extremely high metabolism that promotes fast healing. First-generation dray regenerate 1 hp per hour, while second-generation dray regenerate 1 hp per two hours.

Stamina bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Stamina/Strength subability score.

Tail swipe (5): First-generation dray can attack creatures from behind with a vicious swing from their tail. The tail attack suffers −4 to hit but causes 1d3 hp damage.

Tough hide (10): The PC has a natural AC of 7. A first-generation dray's AC might change due to subsequent mutations.

Wings (15): The PC was born with large, leathery wings (extremely rare first-generation mutation), allowing an aerial movement rate of 24 with MC D. The wings' size cause ambulatory problems for the dray, reducing ground movement rate to 9.

First-generation dray mutations

Because of their unstable magical nature, all first-generation dray manifest some sort of mutation (listed below). Players may opt to select a mutation solely for its role-playing effect (having no special game benefit or penalty) or may choose to roll for a random mutation.

Upon selection of a mutation, the player should decide on a possible outward appearance of the mutation. For example, a decreased strength score may cause the dray to appear gaunt and gangly. A mutation is always taken after the player has picked the PC's racial abilities. A mutation, whether beneficial or not, does not cost any CPs.

1d20	Effect
1	A randomly selected limb is human instead of dray (limb has no claws and is AC 10).
2	The PC's scales are thin and soft, causing a penalty of −2 to AC.
3	Strength score reduced by 1d2.
4	Constitution score reduced by 1d2.
5	Intelligence score reduced by 1d2.
6	Wisdom score reduced by 1d2.
7	The PC's claws are razor sharp; claw attacks cause 1d8 hp damage.
8	The PC's scales are thicker, giving him a −2 bonus to AC.
9	The PC's teeth are human; dray has no natural bite attack.
10	The PC's claws are jagged and dull; claw attacks cause 1d4 hp damage.
11	Strength score raised by 1d2.
12	Constitution score raised by 1d2.
13	Intelligence score raised by 1d2.
14	Wisdom score raised by 1d2.
15	The first-generation dray can pass as second-generation dray (stands upright, no tail, no apparent deformities).
16	The PC grows sharp horns on top of his head. A successful head butt causes 1d6 hp damage.
17	Human appearance — The PC can pass for a human (natural AC of 10).
18	Human head — The PC has a completely human head on otherwise dray body (−1 Charisma).
19	Hair — The PC grows coarse, unmanageable hair all over face and body (−3 Charisma).
20	Roll twice for two mutations ignoring any 20s.

Dwarves

Standard abilities: Focus bonus, infravision, saving throw bonus

Attack bonus (5): The PC receives a +1 to hit bonus with a weapon of choice.

Fear bonus (5): The stout and hardy PC gains a +2 bonus to all magical and non-magical fear checks.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Fitness/Constitution subability score.

Focus bonus (10): The PC receives a bonus when working toward his particular focus. This is a +1 bonus to all saving throws, a +2 bonus to all proficiency checks, and a +10 to all percentile rolls.

Great war yell (10): Thrice per day in battle, the PC can let out a thunderous battle cry that affects all beings in front of the dwarf within 20'. Beings whose hit dice are less than or equal to the dwarf must save vs. spells or be stunned for 1d4 rounds from the force of the yell. A victim who saves is deafened for 1d4 rounds. Beings whose Hit Dice are higher than the dwarf's are unaffected.

Health bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Health/Constitution subability score.

Infravision (10): The PC gains natural infravision to 60'.

Metal sense (5): The PC has an innate ability to detect metal within a 30' radius of his location once per day per level.

Muscle bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Muscle/Strength subability score.

Regeneration (10): The PC possesses an extremely high metabolism which promotes fast healing. Dwarf regenerates 1 hp an hour.

Saving throw bonus (10): The PC gains a saving throw bonus based on his Constitution ability score as detailed in *AoH*.

Thick skin (10): The PC suffers only half damage from bludgeoning weapons due to extremely thick skin and dense muscles.

Tough hide (10): The PC possesses particularly toughened skin, allowing a natural AC of 8.

Table 2: Key to source abbreviations

AoH	*Age of Heroes* (Dark Sun Campaign Setting)
CPS	*The Complete Psionics Handbook*
CGH	*The Complete Gladiators Handbook*
DK	*Dragon Kings*
DPA	*Defilers & Preservers of Athas*
MLLS	*Mind Lords of the Last Sea*
TKA	*Thri-Kreen of Athas*
WotP	*Way of the Psionicist* (Dark Sun Campaign Setting)
WBW	*The Will and the Way*
WJC	*Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs*

* Contact is a bonus proficiency for psionicists and a general proficiency for wild talents.

Elves

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Bow bonus, desert surprise bonus, elf run, inbred swiftness, infravision, sword bonus

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Aim/Dexterity subability score.

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Balance/Dexterity subability score.

Bow bonus (5): When using a bow crafted by a member of his tribe, the PC gains a +1 attack bonus.

Cold resistance (5): The PC has a greater resistance to cold, gaining a +1 to saving throws vs. magical and non-magical cold attacks.

Desert surprise bonus (5): In the desert or steppes of Athas, the PC can move with great stealth. As a result non-elves or mixed groups suffer −4 surprise roll penalty when encountering the PC alone or with other elves.

Elf run (10): The PC can run up to 50 miles in a single day, as detailed in *AoH*.

Haggle (5): The PC's sly cunning and entrepreneurial outlook on life enhances all elves' natural bargaining ability. With this option, an elf selling an item is able to command 5–10% more for the item. Likewise, an elf buying an item is able to reduce its cost by 5–10%. If the elf is also a trader, this benefit is added to the PC's fast talking ability (provided that the fast talking option is also chosen) but only when haggling. This bonus is also applied to the bargain proficiency.

Heat resistance (5): The PC has a greater resistance to heat, gaining a +1 bonus to saving throws vs. magical and non-magical fire and heat attacks.

Illusion immunity (10): Elves on the average have a higher intelligence than other races, preventing them from being fooled by magical deceptions and the like. The PC is immune to all natural illusions (e.g., mirages) and first-level illusion magics.

Inbred swiftness (10): The PC receives a bonus to his base movement rate of 12 based on his Dexterity score as noted in *AoH*.

Infravision (10): The PC has natural infravision to 60'.

Sword bonus (5): When using a sword crafted by a member of his tribe, the PC gains a +1 attack bonus.

Kreen enemy (5): The PC's racial hatred of all kreen grants a +2 bonus to damage on attack rolls against thri-kreen, tohr-kreen and trin.

Water conservation (10): The elf's body is extremely efficient in regulating body heat and the body's need for water. An elf with this option requires only half his daily water requirement dependent upon the type of activity the elf is currently involved in.

Half-elves

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Animal companion, infravision

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Balance/Dexterity subability.

Animal companion (15): At 5th level, a half-elf can befriend one creature as per *AoH*.

Detect lie (5): Half-elves distrust most societies as they are usually unfeeling if not hostile to half-breeds. Because of their wariness when dealing with people, the PC can see through many falsehoods spoken to him. Once per day, the PC can *detect lie* as the priest spell.

Heat resistance (5): Stemming from his elven ancestry, the PC has inherited a greater resistance to heat, gaining a +1 bonus to saving throws vs. magical and non-magical fire and heat attacks.

Infravision (10): The half-elf has natural infravision to 60'.

Inbred Swiftness (10): The blood of his elven parent runs strong in the PC, who receives a bonus to his base movement rate of 12 according to Dexterity score, just as elves do, as noted in *AoH*.

Racial appearance (5): The half-elf strongly resembles the race of one parent (player chooses which one) and is able to pass as a member of that race most of the time (90% undetectable as a half-elf in a casual setting). If the half-elf comes under scrutiny, this percentage may drop at the DMs discretion. Half-elves that look elven might find acceptance with that parent's tribe.

Racial tolerance (5): Through his greater understanding of elves and humans and by the sheer forcefulness of his personality, the half-elf is better able to overcome the natural prejudices from both elves and humans. The character receives a +4 bonus to all reaction adjustments when dealing with these races.

Survival terrain bonus (5): At 5th level, 7th level, and again at 9th level, the half-elf can add a bonus terrain to his survival proficiency. The half-elf must spend at least one month in the new terrain studying the flora, fauna and geography of the land to gain the bonus terrain. If the half-elf has selected the animal companion option, the half-elf can now also choose an animal from one of these new terrains.

Half-giants

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Double hit points

Double hit points (15): In any class chosen, the PC uses double Hit Dice rolls when determining hit points. Any bonus for Constitution is are added after the Hit Dice are doubled (player cannot select 50% hit point bonus option with this option).

Hit point bonus (10): The PC uses a single die to roll for hit points in his chosen class; however, the PC receives a 50% hit point bonus of the hit die rolled (rounded up) every time new hit points are rolled. Hit point bonuses based on high Constitution scores are added afterward.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Fitness/Constitution subability score.

Health bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Health/Constitution subability score.

Lessen damage (10): The PC is so large and massive that damage from smaller weapons seems like only a pinprick or a slight irritation. As a result, weapons of size S cause only half damage (rounded down). No hit by a weapon can be reduced below 1hp damage.

Mighty strength (10): The large mass of a half-giant's body enhances the PC's natural strength. This causes any attack to be more accurate and cause more damage. The PC adds a +1 to hit and +2 to damage in addition to any other Strength bonuses.

Psionic resistance (15): The PC receives a boon from his giant heritage providing him with a natural psionic resistance. The PC receives a saving throw vs. spells against any psionic attack from all beings other than giants, half-giants, and humans. If the save is successful, the psionic attack fails.

Smashing blow (10): In battle, a blow from a half-giant can actually knock an opponent down (size M or smaller) from the attack's force, due to the half-giant's tremendous strength, size, and weight. The PC must use either fists or a bludgeoning weapon such as a club or mace to accomplish this effect. The opponent is allowed a Balance/Dexterity check to avoid being knocked down. A downed opponent must spend the rest of the round getting back up on his feet and suffers −2 to AC.

Tough hide (10): The PC possesses extremely tough skin inherited from his giant ancestry, providing the PC with an effective AC of 7. This effect is cumulative with any armor the PC wears.

Halflings

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Saving throw bonuses, sling bonus, surprise bonus, thrown weapon bonus

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Aim/Dexterity subability score.

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Balance/Dexterity subability score.

Charm immunity (10): The PC's enlightened outlook on life has given them a higher wisdom and a greater insight into the surrounding world than most other peoples. As a result, the PC is immune to all first level charm/enchantment spells.

Cliff climber (5): The PC has an 80% chance success rate when climbing rocky inclines instead of the 40% normally given to unskilled climbers. This is a trait of the Rhul-thaun, civilized halflings living on the Jagged Cliffs. Additionally, the halfling does not suffer the −15% penalty to climb walls that Athasian halflings normally suffer.

Identify plants (5): The PC's close contact with all of nature grants the ability to identify plants as per the druid ability in the *PHB*.

Jungle stealth (5): In the steamy jungles of Athas, the agile, unencumbered halflings move with great stealth. As a result, non-halflings or mixed groups suffer −4 surprise roll penalty when encountering the PC alone or with other halflings.

Major life shaping (15): The blood of the halfling runs true to his life-shaping ancestors. Once per week, the halfling can cast one of the following life-bestowing spells: *heal, regenerate,* or *restoration.* At 12th level, the halfling can use this life-shaping ability three times a week.

Minor life shaping (10): The PC has inherited an ancient ability from ages ago when his people were once masters over life and life-shaping. Once per day, the halfling can heal 2 hp per level of damage to himself or one creature who is deemed worthy of healing. At 9th level, this ability is improved as the halfling's understanding of the forces of life become greater thus allowing the PC to heal 5 hp of damage per level once per day.

Pass without trace (5): In jungle or forest terrains, the PC can *pass without trace* as per the priest spell at will.

Saving throw bonuses (10): The PC receives a saving throw bonus based on his Constitution ability score as per the *PHB*.

Sling bonus (5): The PC gains a +1 attack bonus when using a sling.

Surprise bonus (5): The PC receives the surprise bonus for halflings as listed in the *PHB*.

Thrown weapon bonus (5): A halfling employing any type of thrown weapon such as daggers, darts, etc. (but excluding slings) gains a +1 attack bonus.

Vicious bite (5): Acting on his carnivorous nature, the halfling has trained himself to deliver a vicious bite that tears flesh from the victim. A successful bite inflicts 1d4 hp damage. A halfling will bite only edible beings.

Humans

Racial abilities

Attack bonus (5): The PC gains a +1 attack bonus with a weapon of choice.

Damage bonus (5): The PC gains a +1 to all damage caused by a weapon of choice.

Bonus XP (5): The PC receives a 5% bonus on all experience points earned.

Bonus hit point (10/15): The human gains 1 additional hit point whenever new hit points are rolled, if the 10-point option is taken. The 15-point option grants two additional hit points.

Bonus wild talent (10): PC may roll for one extra psionic wild talent in addition to any other wild talents the character possesses. Psionicists cannot select this option.

Magic blasted (10): Centuries of exposure to the twisted energies of defiling magic has had an odd effect on some humans. The PC is permanently affected by a modified *detect magic.* At all times, the human can see the magical aura surrounding enchanted items and spell effects provided they are wizardly in origin. The PC also gains the ability to determine whether such magic is defiler or preserver based. Additionally, the PC has become immune to the initiative point loss incurred when in the destructive diameter of a defiler's spell.

Magic resistance (10/15): The PC possesses a minor resistance to magic. The 10-point option grants a resistance equal to 2%/level, while the 15-point option grants a resistance of 3%/level.

Tough hide (10): The human has extremely toughened skin granting a natural AC of 7.

Muls

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Exertion

Attack bonus (5): The PC gains a +1 attack bonus with a weapon of choice.

Exertion (20): The PC has incredible endurance and can work harder and longer before needing rest than other races, as detailed in the description of muls in *AoH*.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Fitness/Constitution subability score.

Health bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Health/Constitution subability score.

Infravision (10): A PC with this ability gains natural infravision to 30'.

Magic resistance (10): As the offspring of a non-magical dwarf and a magic capable human, the mul was born with a rare magical resistance equal to 2%/level.

Mighty strength (15): Bred for toughness, muls possess a natural physical strength above and beyond other demihumans their own size. This strength causes all attacks to be more accurate and cause more damage. The PC gains a +1 attack bonus and a +2 damage bonus in addition to any other Strength bonuses.

Popularity (5): Muls are often the celebrated heroes of a city's gladiator arena and in general are admired by a city's populace. In the mul's home city, the PC gains +2 to all reaction encounters. In any other Tyr region city, the PC gains +1 to all reaction encounters.

Regeneration (10): The PC's hardy Constitution heals the PC of 1 hp per every two hours.

Tough hide (10): Inherited from his dwarven side, the PC possesses thick skin and dense muscles allowing a natural AC of 8.

Pterrans

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Natural attacks, tough hide

Attack bonus (5): The PC receives a +1 attack bonus with any weapon created by pterrans.

Bite attack (5): The PC may attack with a nasty bite causing 1d6 hp damage. If the character selected natural attacks, then the pterran can attack with both talons and a bite in one combat round.

Earth mother's blessing (10): The PC has been blessed by the elemental powers of earth. If wounded, the pterran regains 5 hp after a full night's rest (instead of 1 hp) as long as the pterran sleeps on open ground. This does not include any regenerative powers the pterran may have from a high Constitution score.

Earth mother's unyielding grip (5): The PC can cast *Maximillian's stony grasp* once per day as per the wizard spell in *ToM*.

Earth mother's vigilance (5): As long as the PC stands on open ground or stone, he can be surprised only on a roll of 1 on 1d10. This includes standing on the first floor of a building's stone floor (e.g., on marble tile) but not any floor above.

Earth mother's warning (5): The PC is instantly informed by the earthen elemental powers of any defiling occurring within one mile. The PC learns the direction and approximate distance from himself of where the defiling occurred.

Hearing defense (5): The unusual structure and location of the pterrans' ear organs protects them from damaging, loud noises. The PC receives a +2 to all saves vs. spells or natural attacks that cause harm through noise

Life path bonus (5): A PC who opts to dedicate himself solely to the Greater Life Path of the pterrans (choosing to be a single class warrior, druid or psionicist) receives a +5% bonus to all XP awards.

Natural attacks (5): The PC can use his talons in combat, thus allowing two claw attacks per round with no proficiency penalty. A successful attack does 1d4 of damage per claw.

Psionic defense (10): Any psionic defense modes that the PC possesses are always considered passively "on" as a natural defense against potential attacks. This costs no PSP expenditure until after the PC is attacked psionically. Once attacked, the pterran must decide which defenses to "keep on" and pay the appropriate PSPs to maintain each defense until combat ends.

Stealth (5): In jungle or forest areas, the PC's natural coloration serves as camouflage. When the PC attempts to surprise an opponent in this environment, the intended victim suffers a −2 penalty to surprise rolls.

Tough hide (10): The PC's scaly reptilian hide grants the PC a natural AC of 8.

Thri-Kreen

Racial penalties

Inability to swim or climb: Thri-kreen cannot swim or float. A thri-kreen submersed in water drowns in one-third the number of rounds of the thri-kreen's constitution score. Thri-kreen understandably possess an innate fear of large bodies of water. A thri-kreen's arms cannot support its weight, preventing the PC from climbing surfaces, trees, etc.

Vulnerable to humidity: Exposure to long-term humidity can cause a thri-kreen's chitinous shell to rot, possibly adversely affecting the thri-kreen's AC.

Racial abilities

Standard abilities: Antennae sense, dodge missiles, jump, natural attacks, poisonous spittle, tough hide

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Aim/Dexterity subability score.

Antennae sense (5): The PC can use its antennae to help maneuver through brush and grasslands in the dark, lessening the effects of darkness and blindness on melee combat by 1.

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Balance/Dexterity subability score.

Dodge missiles (5): At 7th level, the PC can dodge missile fire on a roll of 9 or better on a 1d20. Only physical missiles can be dodged, not magical effects. Enchanted items apply a penalty to the roll for every plus of their enchantment.

Elven predator (5): The PC relishes elf flesh and always hungers for more. In combat against elves, the mantis warrior gains a +2 to all weapons attacks against elves. An elven predator will never accept an elf into the clutch and sees all elves as delicacies to be savored.

Evolutionary advance (10): This PC's four arms have mutated into wings, allowing flight. Winged thri-kreen fly with a movement rate of 24 and MC E. Winged thri-kreen cannot attack with their wings but can still bite normally if the natural attacks option is taken.

Hunting bonus (5): If the thri-kreen is hunting prey for consumption, the mantis warrior gains a +1 attack bonus with natural weapons.

Jump (5): Upon reaching 3rd level, the PC can jump 20' straight up or 50' forward. Thri-kreen cannot jump backward.

Natural attacks (5): The PC must select this option to use his natural claw and bite attacks. A claw causes 1d4 hp damage while a bite inflicts 1d4+1 hp damage. Once per round, the thri-kreen can bite once and attack with all four claws.

Pheromone speech (5): The PC can transmit non-verbal messages to all kreen within 20' with the release of pheromones. Such messages are limited to simple 1−2 word commands such as "stay back," "prey near," "retreat," or "attack now." Kreen receiving a pheromone message are under no obligation to obey the sender. This effective means of communication can aid in

coordinating attacks or strategies among friendly kreen.

Poisonous spittle (5/15): At 5th level, the PC develops a venomous saliva. A bitten victim must save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for a number of rounds as detailed in *AoH*. If the 1-point option is taken, the thri-kreen's poisonous bite is also caustic and causes 2d4 hp damage in addition to its paralytic effect (successful save causes no paralyzation and only half damage).

Psionic resistance (15): The insectoid nature of the PC is more alien than most to attacking psionicists. The PC receives a saving throw vs. spells against psionic attacks from non-kreen or non-insect type beings. If successful, the psionic attack fails.

Quicker movement (5): The PC has a base movement of 21.

Tough hide (10): The tough chitinous carapace of the PC provides the mantis warrior with an AC of 5.

4. Character classes

Each class has a standardized package of abilities found in *AoH*, which is also duplicated here for easy reference. Players may opt to take the standard list of skills or choose to customize their PCs using the powers listed here. More information concerning each class (physical descriptions, allowable weapons/armor, level limits, level limits, minimum requirements, and racial restrictions) is also found in *AoH*.

Sub-class	CP Allotment
Fighter	45
Gladiator	50
Ranger	55
Defiler	40
Preserver	55
Cleric	45
Druid	60
Templar	60
Bard	90
Thief	80
Trader	80
Psionicist	110

Warriors

Using the rules in the revised boxed set, each warrior rolls 1d4 and adds that number to his Strength ability score. The PC's new Strength score may also be divided into sub-ability scores. No Strength score, however, can rise above 24 with this bonus.

Optional restrictions

All sub-classes of warriors can gain bonus CPs to spend on abilities appropriate to their sub-class by accepting the following voluntary restriction on normal abilities:

Limited armor (+5/+10): Warriors who choose the 5-point restriction limit their armor to scale mail, hide armor, or lighter. The 10-point restriction may be taken by warriors who decide never to wear armor. All warriors may still use shields.

Limited weapon selection (+5): A warrior with this restriction is limited in the choice of weapons. The warrior selects weapons from only one of the following groupings: melee weapons only (no missile weapons); bludgeoning weapons and sling-type weapons; weapons allowed the psionicist class (hand crossbow, dagger, dart, dirk, knife, scourge, sickle, short sword, and wrist razor).

Fighter abilities

Standard abilities: Attract followers, commanding presence, defensive constructions, teaching ability, and war machines.

Attract followers (10): Beginning at 10th level, the PC attracts followers as described in *AoH*. The PC must also have commanding presence to choose this option.

Commanding presence (10): The PC can effectively command large numbers of troops at 7th level, as per *AoH*.

Defense bonus (10): The PC is adept at fighting unarmored, thus lowering AC by two when not wearing armor.

Defensive constructions (10): At 6th level, the PC can supervise the construction of military defenses as per *AoH*.

Greater hit points (10): The PC rolls d12 for hit points.

Inspiring leader (10): As long as the PC is at the front of a combat, he and his compatriots gain +1 to all attack rolls and suffer no morale penalties.

Multiple specialization (10): The PC can specialize in multiple weapons. The PC must pay the initial CPs to become proficient with each weapon as well as the additional CPs required to specialize.

Teaching ability (5): At 3rd level, a fighter can train students to be proficient in any weapon the fighter has specialized in as listed in *AoH*.

War machines (10): At 4th level, the PC can operate heavy war machines, including bombardment engines, crushing engines, and siege towers.

Weapon specialization (5): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Gladiator abilities

Standard abilities: Armor optimization, attract followers, automatic weapon proficiency, multiple specialization and unarmed combat.

Arena opponent (5): The gladiator has been trained in the arena to fight one particular race of demi-humans or humanoids with greater finesse, granting the gladiator a +2 to hit on all attack rolls against that race.

Armor optimization (10): As the gladiator advances, he learns to move and position armor so it absorbs blows better than normal. For every 5 levels of experience, the gladiator gains a +1 AC bonus, provided the gladiator is wearing some form of armor, as per *AoH*.

Attract followers (10): A gladiator attracts followers when he reaches 9th level, as detailed in *AoH*.

Automatic weapon proficiency (15): The gladiator is automatically proficient in all weapons, as per *AoH*.

Critical kill (10): The PC has been specially trained to deliver crippling if not fatal blows in combat. If he strikes a human, demi-human, or humanoid opponent with a weapon in which he specialized and the player rolls four or more higher than the required attack roll, the PC causes double damage.

Feign death (5): The PC has learned to fake his death and thus hopefully end a combat without being slain. Once per day, the PC can *feign death* as per the wizard spell.

Greater hit points (10): The PC rolls a d12 for hit points.

Local hero (5): The PC is considered a hero in any city where he has fought more than five arena combats and won. The PC is instantly recognized and treated as a local celebrity. Shopkeepers lower prices by 15–25% for the PC to show the populous that the "city hero" prefers their stores. Lower-class citizens follow the gladiator around the city, hoping for some display of bravado or a piece of his cloak, hair, etc. Templars and local officials turn a blind eye to minor infractions. The gladiator gains a +4 to all reaction rolls in the city. Of course, if the gladiator commits a serious crime, the populace may turn against their local hero, depending on the nature of the offense.

Multiple specialization (10): A gladiator can specialize in multiple weapons

as a reward for years of training and discipline. The gladiator must pay the initial CPs to become proficient with each weapon, as well as pay the additional CPs required to specialize.

Patron (10): At 7th level, the PC's successes in the arena have attracted the attention of a wealthy patron. The patron pays for luxurious food and lodging for his gladiator and supplies a generous allowance (10 times the gladiator's level in gold pieces per month) provided that the gladiator fights and wins in any city arena four times a year. Only death frees a gladiator from this obligation. A gladiator who does not live up to his end of the bargain (by continual losses or refusing to fight) is marked for assassination by the patron.

Unarmed combat (5): The gladiator is an expert at unarmed combat as per *AoH*.

Weapon specialization (5): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Ranger abilities

Standard abilities: Attract followers, empathy with animals, elemental priest spells, hide in shadows, move silently, special enemy, two-weapon style, and tracking ability.

Animal bond (10): With extensive training, the PC has forged a unique, almost symbiotic bond with a particular animal. When fighting alongside his animal, both ranger and animal gain a +1 to all attack rolls and a +1 bonus to AC, as the two are effectively able to coordinate attacks on a primitive level. A ranger is allowed to have only one trained animal at a time.

Attract followers (10): At 10th level, the PC begins to attract followers as per *AoH*.

Bow bonus (5): The PC gains a +1 attack bonus when using any bow.

Empathy with animals (5): When dealing with a domestic or non-hostile animal, the PC can approach and befriend it automatically. A ranger's adeptness with both trained and untrained animals is presented in the *PHB*.

Elemental empowerment (10): The PC's elemental spells have either a double effect or double duration. The ranger must also select the elemental priest spells option.

Elemental resistance (5): At 8th level, the PC is rewarded by the elemental powers he worships and receives +2 to all saves against attacks from his chosen element.

Elemental priest spells (10): Starting at 8th level, the PC can learn priest spells from one elemental sphere of his choice as per *AoH*.

Hide in shadows (5): The ranger can hide in shadows as described in *AoH*.

High wisdom bonus (5): The PC receives bonus spells for high wisdom the same as priests.

Move silently (5): The PC moves silently as described in the *PHB*.

Pass without trace (5): The ranger can *pass without trace* as per the priest spell.

Special enemy (10): The PC may pick one species enemy. Against a species enemy, the PC gains a +4 attack bonus. A PC will always attack a species enemy first, possibly ignoring other, deadlier threats.

Speak with animals (5): At 5th level, the PC may *speak with animals* twice per day as the druid ability.

Two weapon style (5): The PC can fight with two weapons and suffer no penalties to his attack rolls. Excluding thri-kreen rangers, no shield can be used when a ranger fights in this manner.

Tracking ability (5): The PC receives the standard ranger tracking ability as per the *PHB*.

Weapon specialization (10): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Wizards

Optional restrictions

A wizard can gain bonus points to spend on the above abilities by accepting the following voluntary restrictions on normal abilities:

Limited magical item use (+5): A wizard with this restriction disdains enchanted items and refuses to use magical items from certain categories: potion-fruits/oil-fruits/scrolls; rings/rods/staves/wands; miscellaneous magic; magical weapons/magical armor. The wizard gains 5 points for each restriction selected.

Defiler/preserver abilities

Standard abilities: The standard options for both defilers and preservers grants them access to all eight schools of magic plus the Path Bonus option. The Threefold Path that all Athasian wizards follow is detailed in *Defilers & Preservers of Athas*.

Notes on defilers: All defilers gather spell energy as per the Gathering Spell Energy Through Defiling Magic table in *AoH*. This ability and the Path Bonus option are free for defilers and do not cost any CPs. While this might initially appear as a boon for defilers, it is not. The vile nature of defiling locks defilers into a rigid way of handling magic, thereby limiting the options available to them as a sub-class (thus explaining the differing starting amount of CPs given to defilers and preservers). Defilers continue to suffer a loss to Charisma from the defiling taint, as per *AoH*.

Access to schools: It costs 5 points per school to which the preserver or defiler has access. Normally, wizards spend 40 points to cast spells from all eight standard schools: abjuration, alteration, conjuration/summoning, enchantment/charm, divination, illusion/phantasm, invocation/evocation and necromancy.

Armored wizard (10): The PC may wear scale mail, hide armor, or lighter and still be able to cast spells.

Automatic spells (5): When a PC with this option gains access to a new level of spells, the PC automatically gains a spell of choice from that level.

Block defiling (5): Using his special understanding of magical energy and its connection to all life, the PC can attempt to prevent a defiler from leeching the life-force of the land by temporarily severing the defiler's ability to tap that life-force. The defiler is allowed a save vs. spells. If failed, the defiler can power spells only with his own life energy at a rate of 1 hp per spell level for the next 24 hours. A successful save indicates that the defiler is unaffected. A wizard may attempt this once per day.

Constitution adjustment (5): The PC uses the constitution-based hit point bonus allowed to warriors.

Detect magic (5): PCs purchasing this ability can *detect magic* once a day for every 3 levels.

Greater hit points (10/20): The 10-point option allows the PC to use d6 when rolling for hit points. A PC selecting the 20-point option rolls a d8 for hit points.

Hide in shadows (5): Despised and hunted by most of the world, the PC has learned to escape detection by hiding. The wizard can hide in shadows as a ranger of the same level.

Path bonus (15): The wizard receives a +15% bonus to his chance of spell

learning from spells belonging to his "path" (Path Sinister for defilers and Path Dexter for preservers). Regardless of whether this option is taken, all wizards suffer a −15% penalty when learning spells from the opposing path. All wizards learn spells from the Path of Concurrence without penalty or bonus. This option is automatically taken free of CP cost by all defilers and cannot be substituted for any other option.

Read magic (5): PCs purchasing this ability can *read magic* once a day for every 3 levels.

Sacrifice (5): The PC can voluntarily substitute his own life force to power defiling spells at the rate of 1 hp per spell level provided that the wizard is within 100' from where the defiling occurs. This sacrificing prevents the land from being defiled. However, a wizard can never die from sacrificing (e.g., never be reduced below 1 hp). This option is open to both preservers and defilers.

Warrior wizard (10): The PC uses the rogue's THAC0 in melee.

Weapon specialization (10): PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Priests

Elemental cleric abilities

Standard abilities: As a granted ability, the cleric naturally has major access to his chosen elemental sphere (no CP cost). The standard Athasian cleric has the following abilities: Gate element, ignore element, cosmos sphere access − minor, and turn undead. DMs using the clerical powers in the *Earth, Air, Fire & Water* should consider these abilities as a free bonus from the elemental powers.

Cosmos sphere access − Minor (10): The PC is granted minor access to spells from the sphere of Cosmos.

Cosmos sphere bonus (5): If the PC takes the sphere of cosmos − minor option, he now gains access to 4th-level spells from that sphere.

Elemental spell bonus (10): The PC casts elemental spells as if two levels higher with regard to duration, range, area of effect and the spell's effects (i.e., damage, number of creatures affected, etc.).

Elemental wizard spells (10): The PC has access to all wizardly magics of his chosen element. A list of wizard spells by element can be found in the *Tome of Magic* and *Player's Option: Spells & Magic*.

Gate element (10/15): At 7th level, the PC can gate in 1 cubic foot per level above 6th level of his chosen element as per *AoH*. The 15-point option allows a cleric at 7th level to gate in 1 cubic foot of his element per level possessed.

Greater hit points (10): The PC rolls d10 for hit points.

Ignore element (10/15): At 5th level, the PC can ignore his chosen element for as many rounds as levels possessed once per day. The 15-point option allows the cleric to ignore his element for one turn per level per day.

Sacrifice (5): A cleric with this option powers defiling magic performed in the cleric's presence with his own single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Druid abilities

Standard abilities: conceal, cosmos sphere access: major, elemental sphere access − major, elemental sphere access − minor, shapechange, speak with animals, speak with plants and sustenance.

Conceal (5): On his guarded lands, the PC can remain concealed against normal forms of detection. The PC cannot move or cast spells while concealed.

Cosmos sphere access − major (10): The PC gains major access to the sphere of the Cosmos.

Cosmos sphere access − minor (5) The PC gains minor access to the sphere of the Cosmos.

Defiler knowledge (5): The Spirit of the Land immediately informs the PC when and precisely where a defiler has entered the druid's guarded lands.

Elemental sphere access − major (10): The PC gains major access to one elemental sphere of spells provided that the chosen element is associated with the druid's guarded lands. Note that a druid choosing a minor elemental sphere must select an element different from the major elemental sphere.

Elemental sphere access − Minor (5): The PC gains minor access to one elemental sphere of spells provided that the chosen element is associated with the druid's guarded lands.

Magic resistance (10): The Spirit of the Land provides the druid with a magic resistance equal to 2% per level of the druid.

Return to guarded lands (10): Once per week, the PC can *teleport* back to his guarded lands from anywhere on Athas. This ability takes one round and allows only one-way travel to the guarded lands.

Sacrifice (5): A PC with this option absorbs all damage caused to his guarded lands by defiling spells. This ability is always on and affects the PC wherever he is on Athas. The PC suffers 1 hp of damage per level of the defiling spell to be powered and can be killed by powering defiler magic in this way.

Shapechange (10): At 10th level, the PC can shapechange three times per day into creatures common to his guarded lands, as per the *AoH*.

Speak with animals (5): At 3rd level, the PC can speak with animals on his guarded lands. At 7th level, the PC can speak with all animals regardless of location.

Speak with plants (5): At 5th level, the PC can speak with plants on his guarded lands. At 9th level, the druid can speak with all plants regardless of location.

Strength from the spirit (5): Once per week, the druid may draw on the strength of the Spirit of the Land to temporarily raise his Strength score to 25 for 1 turn + 1 round per level.

Sustenance (5): As long as the PC remains on his guarded lands, the character does not need to eat or drink, as he now draws nourishment and life-energy from his guarded lands.

Templar block (5): The PC and the Spirit of the Land seek to weaken sorcerer-kings wherever possible. A templar on the druid's guarded lands is effectively cut off from his Sorcerer-King and cannot request new spells. The templar can still cast any spells already memorized.

Weapon specialization (15): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Templar

Standard abilities: Accuse, command undead, create scrolls and potions, enter house, judgment, order slave/pass judgment, palatial access, pardon, requisition soldiers, spells from the sorcerer-king, and treasury use.

Accompaniment (5): At 8th level, the PC is allowed to take an accompanying person into any area that the templar has access to without being refused.

Accuse (5): At 4th level, the PC can accuse a freeman of disloyalty (or similar crimes) with no regard for evidence. At 10th level, the PC can now accuse a noble. The accused can be locked up in the city dungeons for as long as the templar desires.

Templar spell progression

Templar Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
3	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
4	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
5	3	2	–	–	–	–	–
6	3	2	1	–	–	–	–
7	3	2	2	–	–	–	–
8	3	3	2	1	–	–	–
9	3	3	3	1	–	–	–
10	3	3	3	2	–	–	–
11	4	3	3	2	1	–	–
12	4	4	3	3	1	–	–
13	4	4	4	3	2	–	–
14	5	5	4	4	2	1	–
15	6	6	5	5	3	2	1
16	7	7	6	6	4	3	1
17	7	7	7	7	5	4	2
18	8	8	8	8	6	4	2
19	9	9	9	9	7	5	3
20	9	9	9	9	9	6	4

Bounty hunt (5): For the express purpose of hunting outlaws, a templar who has requisitioned soldiers may take them out of the city for a number of weeks equal to the templar's level.

Close establishment (5): At 5th level, the PC can close any establishment or market on any charge levied. No evidence need back up this charge. The establishment is closed until the PC decides it can reopen.

Command undead (5): The PC can command undead. Up to 12 undead can be commanded. A "T" result means the undead automatically obey the PC, while a "D" means the undead become completely subservient to the templar until turned, commanded, or destroyed.

Create scrolls and potions (5): At 6th level, the PC can create scrolls. At 8th level, the templar can create potions.

Enter house (5): At 2nd level, the PC can enter the house of any freeman without being refused. If the occupants refuse, they risk the wrath of the templar and possible legal actions against them.

Imprison templar (5): At 6th level, the PC can order the imprisonment of any templar at least 5 experience levels beneath him. An imprisoned templar must be tried within one week or released. A released templar cannot be arrested again by the same templar more than once a year.

Judgment (5): At 7th level, the PC can pass judgment on a freeman. At 15th level, the PC can pass judgment on a noble. The person judged must be at least two levels lower than the templar. Judgment can take any form such as torture, imprisonment, execution, etc. that the templar sees fit. No evidence is needed to support this judgment.

Legislation (5): At 7th level, the PC can introduce and pass minor laws that take effect immediately. Most often, the laws solely benefit the templar or his associates such as a personal tax exemption, free land grant, personally assigned guards, etc. These laws are usually kept quiet and are often ruled illegal should another person of influence learn of their existence and cause a fuss.

Order public works (5): At 9th level, the PC can direct the building of a public work. The work must serve some public service, but it can also have secondary purposes that might benefit the templar (i.e., laboratory, secret hideout). The PC may spend 20 times his level in gold per month in costs that go to paid labor, slaves, materials, etc. Extra gold is held over for next month's costs. Any public work that takes more than 24 months to complete is considered a drain on the city-state and is taken over by an appointee of the sorcerer-king.

Order slave/pass judgment (5): The PC can order any slave to do his bidding at any time. Failure usually results in the slave's immediate execution at the templar's hands. The rank of the slave's owner is not a concern.

Palatial access (5): At 5th level, the templar gains access to all areas of the sorcerer-kings palace and temples that were previously denied, such as libraries and council chambers. Orders forbidding access from high-level templars must be obeyed however.

Pardon (5): At 17th level, the PC can pardon any condemned man. Only the sorcerer-king can nullify these pardons.

Requisition soldiers (5): At 3rd level, the PC can call up to 1d4 soldiers per level at any time. These soldiers are all 1st-level fighters except for one 2nd-level supervisor. The soldiers cannot be ordered to leave the city without the express permission of the sorcerer-king.

Reverse decision (10): At 10th level, the PC can reverse the decision or act of any other templar that is at least two levels lower than the PC.

Spells from the sorcerer-king (10): The PC receives major access to the sphere of Cosmos and all elemental spheres as a result of his direct link with his sorcerer-king.

Summon templars (10): At 5th level, the PC can call upon 2d4 templars to assist him in some pressing matter within the city (riots for water, food, etc.). Templars are of varying levels but all are at least one level below the summoning templar. The summoned templars try their best to deal with the matter at hand but most likely flee a deadly situation rather than die.

Treasury use (5): At 6th level, the PC can draw on city funds in gold pieces once per month. The number of gold pieces that can be drawn is equal to the templar's level times a roll of 1d10 and then again multiplied by 10.

Weapon specialization (15): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Rogues

All Rogues have access to any standard Rogue thieving skill listed below provided that each skill is paid for with CPs.

Rogue thieving skills: 55 points

The initial values of each Rogue skill and its racial modifiers are detailed in *AoH.* Modifiers based on Dexterity and armor worn are found in the *PHB.* These skills can be improved as the rogue advances in level, but these improvements vary according to class. Bards and traders add nothing to their base skill values at first level; however, each time a bard or trader advances a level, the player receives 20 points to distribute among these skills (no more than 10 points can be assigned to a single skill). Bards may not raise any skill above 95%, while traders may not increase any skill over 80%. Thieves receive 30 points per level starting at first level and have no restrictions on the distributions of those points. Since DARK SUN PCs do not start at first-level, all rogues have additional points dependent on their sub-class to distribute when starting out.

Bribe officials (5): The PC can bribe an NPC with gifts of money or merchandise to sway the NPC's reaction as listed in *AoH.*

Climb walls (5): The PC can climb smooth or vertical surfaces.

Detect noise (5): The PC can hear sounds that others normally cannot.

Escape bonds (5): The PC has a chance to break out of bonds as per *AoH*.

Find/remove traps (5): The PC can attempt to locate and disarm traps.

Forge documents (5): This ability allows the PC to forge documents as per *AoH*.

Hide in shadows (5): The PC can try to hide amongst the shadows.

Move silently (5): At one-third movement rate, a rogue can attempt to move without making a noise.

Open locks (5): The PC has learned the art of lockpicking.

Pick pockets (5): The PC can attempt to pick pockets.

Read languages (5): The PC can attempt to read unknown languages.

Bard

Standard abilities (in addition to all standard Rogue skills): Alter moods, history, master of poisons, and rally friends

Alter moods (5): A bard can influence reactions as described in the *PHB*.

Charm person (10): Once per day, the bard can cast a *charm person*. At 9th level, the bard can cast *charm monster*. instead of *charm person*. once per day.

Charm resistance (10): As a master of wily charms, the bard is better able to discern charming attempts against her. The bard gains a +2 to all charm/enchantment spells and effects.

Detect poison (10): Twice per day, the PC can detect poison. The bard has a 10% chance per level to identify the precise type of poison. A second successful check lets the PC know of any antidote that could counteract the poison.

History (10): The PC knows a "little bit of everything," as described in the *PHB*.

Master of poisons (15): The PC has learned to be a master of poisons both in their manufacture and use as per *AoH*.

Musical assault (5): The PC can play a musical instrument at such an ear-rending pitch so as to cause 2d4 hp damage to all within 30'. It takes two rounds of non-stop playing to reach the painful notes, at which point the instrument has a 50% of breaking for each round of continual, agitated play. Once broken, the instrument is rendered useless.

Poison resistance (10): The PC receives a +2 to all poison saves.

Rally friends (5): Music, stories, and poetry performed by the PC can be inspirational, as per the *PHB*.

Weapon specialization (10): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Thief

Standard abilities (in addition to all standard thieving skills): Backstab, patron, scroll use.

Backstab (10): The PC can attack an opponent with a vicious backstab as detailed in the *PHB*.

Backstab bonus (5): A PC who has chosen Backstab now attacks with a +6 to all backstab attacks.

Defensive bonus (10): An unarmored and unencumbered thief gains a +2 to his AC.

Detect illusion (5): The PC has a 5% chance per level of detecting illusions once per day.

Greater hit points (10): Thief rolls d8 for hit points.

Patron (10): For every level beyond 9th, the PC has a 5% chance per level of attracting a patron as detailed in AoH.

Scroll use (5/10): At 10th level, the PC can use magical spell scrolls. If the 10 point option is used, the thief can read scrolls at any level. Consult the table below to determine the success rate when a thief tries to read a scroll. If the attempt fails, the spell usually backfires with oftentimes disastrous results.

Thief Level	% Chance
1–2	10%
3–4	20%
5–6	30%
7	40%
8	50%
9	60%
10	70%
11 & up	80%

Weapon specialization (15): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Trader

Standard abilities (in addition to all standard thieving skills): Attract agents, fast talking, and new languages

Attract agents (10): At 10th level, the PC attracts agents as per *AoH*.

Danger sense (5): As a master of the art of trading and dealing in all sorts of sticky situations, traders are innately able to perceive when they are being "set-up" (8% chance per level of discerning that a set-up is underway). Set-ups can include but are not limited to: false deals where the trader is to be cheated of merchandise or given shoddy merchandise; an undercover templar trying to purchase contraband; ambushes, etc. The PC does not learn how he is being set-up, only that he is being set-up.

Discern fakes (10): The PC can automatically discern precious gems and other valuables from clever fakes. This includes fake valuables created by magical means.

Fast talking (5): The trader is able to fast-talk his way through deals, scams, sticky situations, etc. as per *AoH*.

Greater hit points (10): The PC rolls d8 for hit points.

New languages (10): At every third level, the PC learns a new language which is added to his list of proficiencies.

Traveling lore (5): As a person who travels the tablelands over and over selling wares and swapping secrets, the PC comes to know the ins and outs of the cities and villages he visits. Within the Tyr region or along trade-routes, the trader has a 10% chance per level of knowing (or discovering) the location of local contacts, safest contacts, closest villages, oases, rare plants & minerals, etc.

Weapon specialization (15): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP point cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

Psionicists

Optional restrictions

A psionicist can gain bonus CPs to spend on the above abilities by accepting the following voluntary restrictions on normal abilities:

"No armor" restriction (15): PCs with this option refuse to wear any armor choosing instead to employ psionic powers to augment their natural defensive abilities.

"No weapons" restriction (15): PCs who are purists regard the mind and body as the ultimate weapon. They disdain the use of any unnatural weapons, preferring their natural weapons and psionic abilities. A psionicist who refuses all weapons receives this bonus.

Standard abilities: All disciplines, all defense modes, all attack modes, and student followers.

Access to disciplines (10/50): Each discipline costs 10 points or 50 points for all five.

Table X: Nonweapon proficiencies

Proficiency	Point cost	Initial rating	Ability score	Source
General				
Bargain	3	7	Wisdom/Willpower	*AoH*
Bribery etiquette	3	7	Wisdom/Intuition	*DPA*
Chitinworking (Thri-Kreen)	2	9	Dexterity/Aim	*TKA*
Cliff fighting (Halfling)	4	n/a	Dexterity/Balance	*WJC*
Contact*	5	n/a	Wisdom/Willpower	*AoH*
Defensive tactics	4	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*DPA*
Gardening	2	7	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Heat protection	4	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*AoH*
Intimidation	2	7	Charisma/Appearance	*DPA*
Mediation	3	6	Charisma/Leadership	*DPA*
Life shaping (Halfling)	4	n/a	Intelligence/Knowledge	*WJC*
Mental armor	4	n/a	Wisdom/Willpower	*AoH*
Prestidigitation	3	7	Dexterity/Aim	*DPA*
Psionic detection	4	5	Wisdom/Intuition	*AoH*
Psychic detection	4	5	Wisdom/Intuition	*W&W*
Ritual knowledge (Halfling)	2	n/a	Intelligence/Reason	*WJC*
Sailing	2	6	Dexterity/Balance	*MLLS*
Sailboarding	3	5	Dexterity/Balance	*MLLS*
Sign language	2	8	Dexterity/Aim	*AoH*
Surfing	4	5	Dexterity/Balance	*MLLS*
Teaching	2	8	Charisma/Leadership	*DPA*
Tending (Halfling)	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*WJC*
Water find	3	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*AoH*
Windancing (Halfling)	3	n/a	Wisdom/Intuition	*WJC*
Windriding (Halfling)	4	n/a	Intelligence/Reason	*WJC*
Warrior				
Arena acting (Glad.)	2	7	Charisma/Appearance	*CGH*
Armor optimization	2	6	Dexterity/Balance	*AoH*
Dirty tricks (Glad.)	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*CGH*
Massage (Glad.)	2	8	Dexterity/Aim	*CGH*
Tactics	2	7	Intelligence/Knowledge	*AoH*
Taunting (Glad.)	2	7	Wisdom/Willpower	*CGH*
Weakness identification (Glad.)	4	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*CGH*
Weapon improvisation	2	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*AoH*
Wizard				
Lens crafting	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Path lore	4	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Planes lore	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Planetology	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*DPA*
Psionic mimicry	3	6	Intelligence/Reason	*DPA*
Sensory alteration	3	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DK*
Spellweaving	2	8	Dexterity/Aim	*DPA*
Somatic concealment	2	5	Dexterity/Aim	*AoH*
Priest				
Bureaucracy	3	8	Charisma/Leadership	*AoH*
Planes lore	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Planetology	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*DPA*
Psionic mimicry	3	6	Intelligence/Reason	*DPA*
Somatic concealment	2	5	Dexterity/Aim	*AoH*
Rogue				
Information gathering	2	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*AoH*
Psionicist				
Crystal focus	3	6	Wisdom/Willpower	*W&W*
Harness subconscious	4	6	Wisdom/Willpower	*WotP*
Hypnosis	3	7	Charisma/Leadership	*CPS*
Lens crafting	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Meditative focus	3	5	Wisdom/Willpower	*WotP*
Planes lore	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	*DPA*
Planetology	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*DPA*
Power manipulation	5	5	Intelligence/Reason	*W&W*
Psionic lore	2	6	Intelligence/Knowledge	*W&W*
Rejuvenation	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	*WotP*

Attack modes (5/25): The PC selects one attack mode for each five points expended (Ego Whip, Id Insinuation, Mind Thrust, Psionic Blast, Psychic Crush).

Defense modes (5/25): The PC selects one defense mode for each five points expended (Intellect Fortress, Mental Barrier, Mind Blank, Thought Shield, Tower of Iron Will).

Greater hit points (10): The PC uses d8 for hit points.

Mental expertise (10): The PC is highly skilled in the use of one power from each of the disciplines. The PC pays only 50% of the cost to use one specified science or devotion from each discipline. Once a power is selected, the psionicist cannot change it to another one.

More PSPs (10): At every level advancement, the PC rolls 4d4 for more PSPs in addition to what is normally rolled for.

Psionic powers bonus (10): At 3rd level and every 3rd level thereafter, the PC can select one bonus devotion. At 5th level and every 5th level thereafter, the psionicist can add a bonus science. Bonus psionic powers must belong to the psionicist's primary discipline.

Student followers (10): The psionicist receives student followers as described in *WotP* or *S&P*.

Warrior psionicist (10): The PC uses the warrior THAC0 table.

Weapon specialization (15): The PC can specialize in a single weapon. The CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option.

5. Character kits

Players may now opt to select a character kit for their PCs. *S&P* lists kits but some of these are unsuitable for play on Athas. Many kits exclusively designed for DARK SUN characters can be found in past and new DARK SUN products. *The City-State of Tyr* accessory lists kits from other AD&D sources that have appeared in the past which are either unacceptable or easily modifiable for use in DARK SUN. The following is a list of all Athasian kits to appear so far and the reference material that contains each kit:

All Classes (*City State of Tyr*): Draqoman.

Cleric (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water): City cleric, guardian of the shrine, shaman, wanderer.

Elf (*The Elves of Athas*): Arcanist (wizard), battle dancer (cleric), brown elf (psionicist), element singer (cleric), free wanderer (rogue), procurer (rogue), savage hunter (warrior), thri-Kreen slayer (warrior).

Gladiator (*The Complete Gladiator's Handbook*): Arena champion, beast trainer, blindfighter, convict, gladitorial slave, jazst, montare, professional gladiator, reaver.

Halfling (*Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs*): Chahn terrorist (warrior), climber (warrior/rogue), windancer (rogue) windrider (rogue).

Psionicist (*The Will and the Way*): Auditor, beastmaster psionicist, mercenary psionicist, noble psionicist, psiologist, sensei, tribal psionicist.

Thri-kreen (*The Thri-Kreen of Athas*): Kalak (scout) (ranger), kik (raider) (all classes), kiltektet (student missionary)

(all classes), tekchakak (pack psionicist) (psionicist), tik (hunter) (all classes except priests), tik-tik (guardian) (fighter).

Wizards (*Defilers & Preservers of Athas*): Advanced being, arena mage, cerulean, chasseur, earth defender, exterminator, free wizard, illusionist, mercenary, necromancer, restorationist, shadow wizard, tribal wizard.

6. Nonweapon proficiencies

At this stage of character development, players spend CPs on nonweapon proficiencies. Standard nonweapon proficiencies by CP cost are listed in *S&P*. DARK SUN warriors, rogues, priests, and wizards receive the same number of CPs for nonweapon proficiencies as the standard AD&D classes given in *S&P*. Psionicists receive 6 initial CPs to purchase nonweapon proficiencies.

Note: All single class PCs and those multi-class PCs with at least one class at 3rd level receive 5 additional CPs at this stage. These CPs are given because the character has earned them for being 3rd level.

The unique DARK SUN nonweapon proficiencies listed on Table X are from the revised campaign setting as well as from past and new DARK SUN products. These proficiencies have been assigned CP costs and initial ratings similar to the proficiencies found in the PLAYER'S OPTION references. Descriptions for each one may be found in the reference indicated. Unique PC classes such as gladiators have been placed in their appropriate proficiency group (warriors, etc.) in Table XXVI: Nonweapon Proficiency Group Crossovers in *AoH*. Standard nonweapon proficiencies modified for use on Athas are detailed in *AoH*. A description of standard nonweapon proficiencies for psionicists may be found in *WotP* or in *S&P*. Players can also avail themselves of any of the traits or disadvantages listed in *S&P*.

7. Weapon proficiency & mastery

All classes must consult chapter 7 of *S&P* for information on acquiring weapon proficiencies and other weapons skills. DARK SUN warriors, rogues, priests, and wizards follow the same weapons rules as their standard *S&P* counterparts. Proficiency rules for psionicists not included in *S&P* are provided below.

❖ Psionicists receive an initial 6 CPs at this stage to purchase weapon proficiencies. Psionicists pay 3 CPs to become proficient in any weapon allowed to their class. A complete list of allowable weapons for psionicists can be found in WotP or *S&P*.

❖ Psionicists must spend an additional 2 CPs to become proficient in a weapon normally allowed to priests or rogues (for a total of 5 points). If the psionicist wishes to be proficient in a weapon normally limited to warriors, the psionicist must spend an additional 3 CPs (for a total of 6 points) to learn that weapon.

❖ Psionicists must consult the Nonproficiency Attack Penalties Table in *WotP* or *S&P* for modifiers to attacks when using weapons with which they are not proficient.

❖ A psionicist must spend 3 CPs to gain a weapon of choice.

❖ A psionicist must spend 5 CPs to receive weapon expertise.

❖ At 7th level, psionicists who have opted for weapon specialization must spend an additional 8 CPs to specialize in one weapon.

DMs and players seeking ways to enhance weapon specialization, weapon mastery, and unarmed combat in their DARK SUN campaigns can find more combat-related options in the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics* reference.

8. Magic

Athas is a world where the practice of wizardly magic is for the most part feared, despised and outlawed. As such, no formalized training or magic institutions are known to exist that could provide specialization in any one particular school of magic. This does not mean, however, that Athasian mages are prohibited from focusing on a particular area of magic. Rather than specializing in a school, both preservers and defilers have a wide variety of magical interests to excel in from harnessing the awesome power of the terrible cerulean storm to mastering the life twisting, necromantic magics found in the Gray; or from becoming a champion defender of Athas's fragile ecology to beginning a life-long quest for immortality as an advanced being. DARK SUN wizards can now explore these types of magic and more via the many new kits and spells offered in the *Defilers & Preservers of Athas* accessory.

Additionally, the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* reference provides alternative ways for wizards and priests to memorize and cast spells based on a new system of spell point accumulation. It is recommended that DMs adding the new spell point system to their campaign choose the "Defiler & Preserver" method for wizards as that method best suits spell casting on Athas. Likewise, since Athasian priests channel their energy from a particular source (be it via the elemental planes or through a sorcerer-king), it is recommended that all Dark Sun priests employ the 'Channeling' method. DMs should not use the preserving spell point system for druids as recommended in *Spells & Magic*, since preserving magic is reserved exclusively for wizards on Athas.

The *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* reference also provides new priest spells. Listed below are priest spells according to their appropriate para/elemental spheres. All other priestly spells in *Spells & Magic* not listed here belong to the sphere of Cosmos.

Air: *Wind column, wind servant, windborne, whirlwind*

Earth: *Strength of stone, soften earth and stone, adamantite mace, antimineral shell*

Fire: *Firelight, animate flame*

Silt: *Soften earth and stone*

Sun: *Sunscorch*

Rain: *Weather prediction, produce ice*

Water: *Watery fist, produce ice, tsunami*

9. Psionics

All Athasian PCs have some sort of psionic ability whether they simply possess a single wild talent or are fully empowered psionicists. Both psionicists and wild talents use the rules in *WotP* or *S&P* to roll for PSPs, determine MTHAC0 & MAC, and acquire psionic powers. Psionicists as a rule do not normally receive wild talents. Conversely, only non-psionicists possess wild talents. A wild talent's psionic ability and attack/defense modes are free for PCs and do not cost any points. Wild talents must first purchase the contact nonweapon proficiency if they desire to initiate psionic attacks.

Ed Bonny has worked as a police officer for nine years in the Transit Bureau of the NYPD. No setting has ever appealed to him as much as the DARK SUN campaign.

DRAGON DICE™ GAME

Mixed-race armies

by Bill Olmesdahl

The first thing a DRAGON DICE™ player notices, after becoming acclimated to the whirling colors of the dice and the cool icon art, is the almost perfect balance of the races. Each one is well suited to challenge any other race, and it's rare that any one side dominates any other side during a game. A lot of careful thought goes into the creation of each race. Each has its own strengths, weaknesses, and strategy.

When players become collectors, they tend to go through a phase where they play armies composed of only one race. There's nothing wrong with this; it removes several variables from the army-creation process, allowing you to concentrate on your army's strengths. Unfortunately, this also serves to heighten your army's weaknesses as well. A good example of this is a coral elf army composed primarily of magic users. The player with this army is going to bring two coastland terrains to the table with him and will try to get his home terrain down into magic as quickly as possible. This is a great strategy, if it works. Most likely, you'll find that the coral elf player will lose the horde roll and won't get to choose the frontier terrain. Immediately, he's at a disadvantage because there's only one terrain in play where his special ability works. If he gets a bad roll for the starting position of his home terrain, the game is practically over.

What can you do to make your armies more multipurpose? The best answer is to mix races. Each race shines in at least one area, so mix in one or two secondary races to make your army adaptable and capable in any situation. The first step in creating multiracial armies is to identify what each race has to offer.

Coral Elves

Color: Blue and green

Strengths: Great archers, good movement

Weaknesses: Few saves

Dwarves

Color: Red and gold

Strengths: Great melee; good saves

Weaknesses: Poor missiles

Goblins

Color: Gold and black

Strengths: Pretty good at almost everything; access to black magic allows them to bury opponent's dead units

Weaknesses: Goblins are the only race (so far) that cannot restore dead units of more than 1-health to life.

Lava elves

Color: Red and black

Strengths: Pretty good at everything except saves; access to black magic allows them to bury opponent's dead units

Weaknesses: Few saves

Amazons

Color: Ivory

Strengths: Great archers; great movement; can use magic based on color of the present terrain

Weaknesses: No reserve magic; cannot double magic (except at standing stones).

Firewalkers:

Color: Red and blue

Strengths: Good melee strength; great missiles; lots of movement, great spells that only they can use

Weaknesses: Lousy saves

Undead

Color: Black

Strengths: Great saves; lots and lots of melee; access to black magic allows them to bury opponent's dead units, spells only they can use

Weaknesses: Cannot charge; little movement; cannot use any color magic except black

Feral

Color: Blue and gold

Strengths: The jack-of-all-trades race; capable at everything; masters of nothing; good spells only they can use

Weaknesses: Their special power isn't as good as some of the other races'

Now that we have listed the strengths and weaknesses of each race, we can see the best ways to mix them. If you're planning on using magic, you should always have one common color between the races that you're mixing.

Coral elves and amazons: These two races combine well to create the ultimate archery army. The races don't share a common home terrain, but neither is badly weakened by operating in one another's terrain. Amazons add badly needed saves to the coral elves, and the coral elves give the army blue and green magic that they can count on.

Lava elves and firewalkers: These are another pair of races that work well together. The blue magic of the firewalkers and the black magic of the lava elves add nicely to the red magic they both use. This is a great mix to use in highland terrain, for a dangerous magician army. The rare firewalker magicians are weak in the cantrip department, but have magic on five of their six sides, giving you points on demand.

Goblins and feral: The feral give the goblins what they've always needed, a spell that can restore uncommon and rare units to life. A large number of goblin rares backed up with feral common troops can be a dangerous force, since they both work well in flatland terrains.

Amazons and Undead: Amazons have missile weapons and access to all colors of magic except black; undead have melee and saves to spare and powerful black magic. Together they are a perfect team for a jack-of-all-trades army. They work well in nearly any terrain, but the amazons shine in flatland terrain.

Mixed armies

Here are some armies that we've put together to give you an idea of how a mixed army should be constructed. These armies are constructed using the tournament rules and are legal and ready to play. All you need to do is supply the dice.

The dogs of war

A dwarven and goblin army

Terrains: Highland temple; swampland city

Dragon: Red wyrm

Dwarven units

Rare: Wizard ×2; warlord ×1; skirmisher ×1

Goblin units

Rare: Leopard rider ×2

Uncommon: Wolf rider ×2

Common: Wardog rider ×1; thug ×1

This army has plenty of movement and scads of magical power. The only weakness it has is in missile range, but neither highland or swampland terrains have a lot of missile ranges on them. Gold magic is able to be doubled at either terrain, allowing the magicians to generate plenty of stone skin spells for those goblin charges.

Carnage is common

A dwarven and lava elf army

Terrains: Highland city ×2

Dragon: Black wyrm

Dwarven units

Common: Pony rider ×13

Lava elf units

Common: Adept ×11

This army is another that's great in melee and has more than its share of powerful magical power. Every unit in this army has both movement and saves, making this a quick army that is difficult to outflank, and hard to damage. The pony riders are especially hard to beat on maneuvers in the highlands, since their movement there is doubled. The adepts are great because they can restore dead units to life through ***raise dead*** spells, burying opposing dead at the same time.

For those of you who enjoy larger battles, here are a couple of large multiracial armies. Army #1, aptly named "Charge!" will prove difficult to assemble for even the most loyal collector because it requires so many rare and monster dice. The second army is a real theme army, which may not win often but is sure to generate laughs as well as hits and saves. It draws on dice from nearly every race and size.

Charge! (50-point army)

Terrain: Swamp temple, highland temple

Dragons: Gold wyrms ×2, gold drake

Goblins

Monster: troll ×2

Rare: leopard rider ×3; death mage ×2

Common: Wardog rider ×2

Dwarfs

Monster: Gargoyle ×2

Rare: Skirmisher; mammoth rider; wizard

Uncommon: Lizard rider ×2

Common: Pony rider ×4

Charge! This army is great anywhere, but especially in swampland and highland terrains. This army has a great deal of mobility and should win most maneuver rolls. In melee, you would be hard pressed to build a better army. These troops saves very well both as a group and individually. The only thing this army can't do is win a missile war. Move into melee as soon as you can and charge. You should be able to destroy almost any force opposing you, especially if you're in the correct terrain.

Protect your trolls at all costs! This is not an army that generates lots of magic. Your trolls will be the best way you have to bring dead units back to life. Make sure that the trolls stay with the gargoyles, so the gargoyles have a chance to negate incoming hostile magic.

If you're having luck in melee and wearing your opponent down, use any gold magic you generate to bury his dead with ***dust to dust*** spells, as well as with normal black magic. I would rather use magic to bury dead units with this army than using the points to try to do damage or cast protections. By burying opposing dead, you can hopefully prevent an "end of the game turn-around" before it happens.

We're off to see the wizard (50-point army)

Terrain: Swamp city (The Emerald City), flatland temple (Kansas)

Dragons: Any

Amazons

Rare: Harbinger (Dorothy Gale); oracle (Glinda the Good Witch)

Dwarves

Rare: Warlord (The Tin Woodsman); wizard (of Oz)

Common: Pony rider ×14 (Munchkins)

Feral

Monsters: Lion-folk (Cowardly Lion); bear-folk

Rare: tiger-Folk

Goblins

Rare: Death mage (Wicked Witch of the West)

Lava Elves

Monsters: Hell hound (Toto)

Undead

Rare: Death knight (Scarecrow)

Magical items

Rare: Red seven-league boots (The Ruby Slippers)

This army is totally untested. It was created in an effort to show you what can be done with a little creativity. I wouldn't want to play an army like this all the time, but I bet it would be fun once or twice. If anyone comes up with other neat ideas for theme armies, jot them down and send them to me care of Dragon magazine and I'll try to work them into a future article.

Bill Olmesdahl is busily designing most of the new DRAGON DICE™ game expansions for 1997. By the time he's done, you'll be able to add Frostwings, Scalders, Champions, and Treefolk to your armies.

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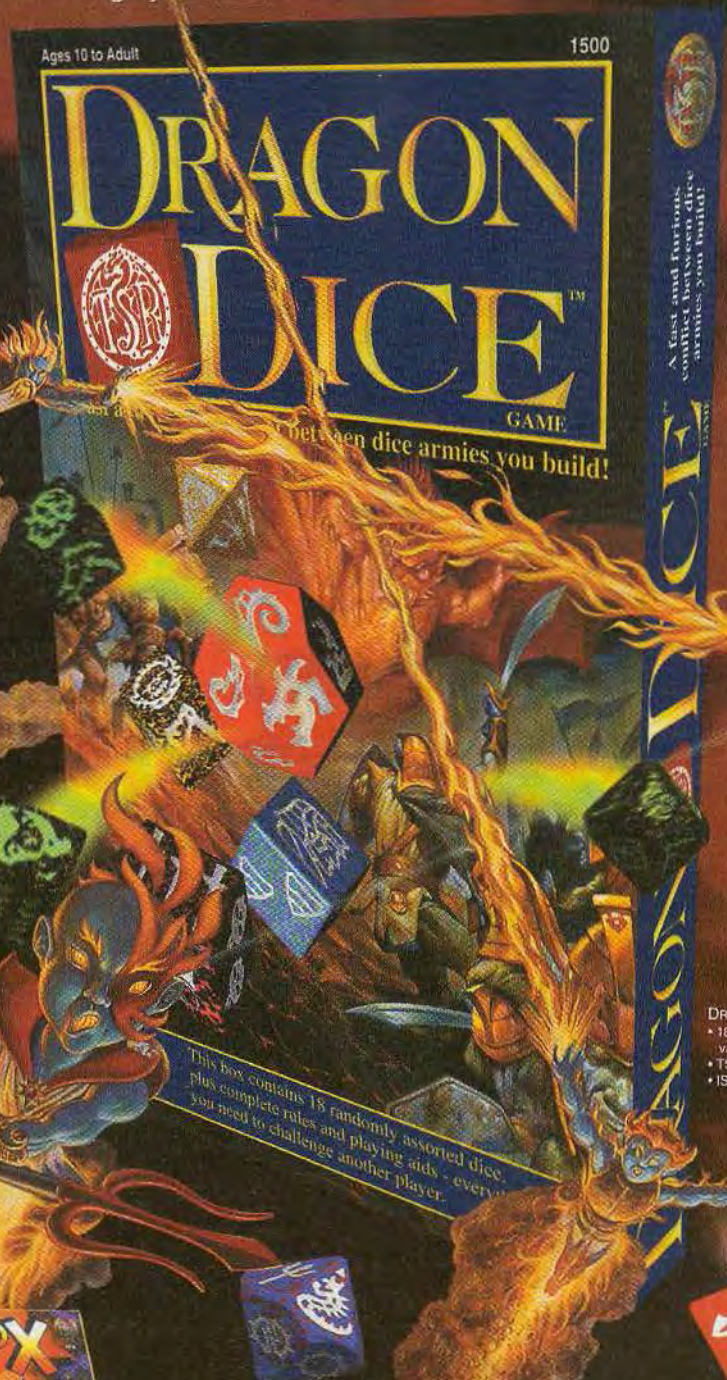
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Deckbuilding

Re-tuning your SPELLFIRE® deck

REVISITED

by Jim Butler

Are you getting tired of playing target for your opponent's latest Deck of Doom? Do each of your vicious card combinations seem absent during actual gameplay? Before you start blaming your losses on your friend's collection of rare cards, you might want to take a look at how you constructed your deck.

Many players begin building decks by placing the most powerful and punishing cards they can find in their decks. But there's a method to the madness, and filling a deck with cards that make your blood run cold at the thought of getting hit by them isn't always the best choice.

Start with a theme

Before deciding on what cards to put into a deck, first decide on what exactly you expect the deck to do. Some common themes include:

- Champion-type (heroes, wizards, clerics, psionicists, monsters, regents).
- Counter (built to go against a specific deck, such as your friend's Deck of Doom).
- Instant-kill (champions and allies that instantly defeat other champions).
- Limited-strategy (such as discarding your opponent's cards before he can use them; stopping events, spells, psionic powers, or other cards from being played; forcing combat).
- Silly (where the last digit of every card number is a 9, all champions are of one specific race or gender, all chase cards, and others).
- Single-card (spells, unarmed combat, psionic powers, allies).
- Special-movement (composed of flyers, swimmers, earth-walkers and other champions that can attack virtually any realm).
- Speed (trying to go through your deck as quickly as possible).
- Tournament (designed to confront a variety of different decks).
- World-specific (uses only cards from a specific world, such as FORGOTTEN REALMS®, DARK SUN®, GREYHAWK®, AD&D®, or other settings).

Of course, one of the joys of SPELLFIRE is that there are as many themes as your imagination can dream up. Don't limit yourself to the choices above; come up with some of your own. Additional examples can be found in either of the *SPELLFIRE Reference Guides*.

Rule cards

Before you get into the process of choosing champions and support cards, pick out at least two rule cards that augment the theme of your deck. Even if you absolutely hate rule cards, make sure to pick at least two cards that can allow you to survive your opponent's playing a rule card against you. After all, if you're not capable of changing the rules, you're only giving your opponent an advantage. Why let him play by rules that help him and hurt you?

The Ultimate Rule Card (18/PO Chase) is the best choice if you want to play a standard game, since it prevents any new rule cards from being played. The Genie Bottle (436/3rd) event is a good way to get rid of any rule card in play (and it can't be stopped). Ellorelloran (93/UD) can actually eliminate two rule cards, one when she's first brought into play and another by discarding her from the pool. If you're looking for a regular game, these three cards can help assure that everyone is playing by the normal rules.

Of course, rule cards can be your friend too. If you're looking to add some power to your deck a rule card is a good way to go. For example, if you're building a combat-oriented deck, using a rule card like the Barbarian's Decree (429/3rd) forces other players to attack or suffer smaller hand sizes.

Realms

Everything else in your deck is expendable, but realms are the most important aspect of the game. You need six unrazed realms to claim victory, and you must draw at least one realm every turn to win. While the rules state that you need a minimum of only eight realms in your deck, you should include at least 12. If you drop the number of your realms down to 10, that means you're going to draw a realm once every 5.5 cards, roughly once every other turn. With 12 realms, you're much more likely to draw one each turn (roughly one realm for every four cards).

Which realms you include in your deck is largely a matter of personal preference, but you should keep three in mind. The first is Menzoberranzan (1/4th), since it can be played at any time. Ancient Kalidnay (92/AR) is a popular choice because it grants its owner an extra turn, and Avanil (5/BR) is like a Good Fortune event, granting its owner five cards. Each of these realms is very popular, and you'll probably see them in any tournament you enter. And, of course, if you get them into play first, that means your opponent might be stuck with cards in his hand that he can't use.

There's another "realm" that is fairly popular as well, and that's the Caer Allison (3/FR)

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event. This event is frequently used as a sixth realm to end the game, granting a quick and unexpected victory. Including this event in your deck might prevent an opponent from winning, especially if you play it into your own formation as he's playing his fifth realm.

Even if you include all of the realms listed above, you still need eight more realms to round out your deck. Which ones should you choose? Again, much depends on which themes you've adopted for your deck. Realms that limit attack by a certain champion type (such as the Ruins of Zhentil Keep, which allows only clerics to attack) are always good choices, since that frequently prevents all but a few of your opponent's champions from attacking. Likewise, realms that require the attacker to be a flyer, swimmer, or earthwalker can prove to be a good defense (but they carry their own weaknesses as well, so don't stock up on them). A well-timed Volcanic Eruption (64/RR) event can wipe out an entire formation of realms that requires flyers or swimmers to attack.

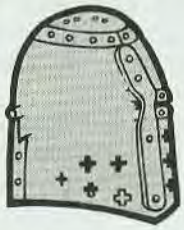
Remember that a realm should primarily serve to aid the defender, whether that aid be by hindering an attacker or providing additional powers to a defender. Realms that prevent specific cards from being used in an attack – such as Daggerdale (7/4th), which prevents allies, or Isle of the Ape (1/RR), which makes its defenders immune to offensive spells and offensive psionic power cards – are good choices.

Holdings

Finding the right holding can be a daunting task if you've selected realms from a variety of different worlds. Since holdings normally must be attached to realms of the same world, it's a good idea to only include a world-specific holding if you have at least three of that world's realms – and don't count realms like Ancient Kalidnay or Avanil, since those realms are going to be razed or discarded almost instantly.

As a general rule, select two or three holdings that appeal to you. Popular choices include Mulmaster (73/4th), Arkhold (94/4th), Keep of the Dead (117/4th), Ancient Arms of the Great Kingdom (145/3rd), and Labyrinth of Madness (21/RR), among others. You can technically have up to five holdings in your deck, but that's advisable only when you have realms of a single world.

When thinking of holdings, don't forget other cards that can duplicate the power of holdings, such as Starshine (438/3rd) and Hallucinatory Terrain (42/FR). Both of these cards allow you to take advantage of another player's strategies and holdings, since they can be attached to any realm.



Champions

There are a few different ways to go when choosing champions for your deck. The first is to include only those cards that relate to your theme, such as including wizards in a spell deck. The second is to limit the scope even further, perhaps by allowing only wizards immune to offensive spells in your deck. A third (and better) strategy is to select champions based on their special powers.

For example, if you're creating a spellcasting deck, you need champions able to cast spells. By picking up champions like Helm (255/4th), Ellorelloran, Adon (282/4th), Iuz, and others, you've created a deck that can't be as easily stopped by instant-win cards (such as the King of the Elves (440/3rd) vs. a deck composed of all wizard champions). Creating decks around a specific type of champion can be an effective strategy, but disaster frequently awaits in the form of cards that prevent those cards from doing anything. Your all-wizard deck is highly susceptible to the Day that Will Live in Infamy (10/FR Chase), and your monster deck

can be crushed in one fell swoop by Treasure (312/3rd) or picked apart repeatedly by Agis (261/3rd) or the Lovely Colleen (22/1st chase).

Ideally, your deck should have at least 12 champions. This will allow you to draw roughly one champion every turn or so. Unless your deck theme demands it, try not to have more than 15 champions in your deck. After all, you need support cards too!

Events

There are literally hundreds of different events to choose from now, and it's sometimes a good idea to forgo events altogether in an effort to get more mileage out of your deck's support cards. Generally, however, every deck should have a few events, if for no other reason than to level the playing field by not letting your opponent have advantages that you don't.

The three truly crucial events include Caravan (131/4th), Good Fortune (120/4th), and Calm. Other worthwhile events to include are Fast-Talking, Cataclysm! (119/4th), Chaos (19/BR), Cold Cup of Calamity (2/FR Chase), Pit Trap (416/3rd), Surprise Raid (101/3rd), and Transformation (125/4th). Again, the specific theme of your deck will determine what additional events to select, but keep these events in mind when choosing others to replace them.

Magical items & artifacts

The selection of magical items is a pretty straight-forward process; simply review the theme of your deck and choose magical items that both aid your cause and confound your opponents. A few prime candidates for magical items are the Rod of 7 Parts, Part 7 (27/AR), the Net of Entrapment (169/4th), For spellcasters, the Star Gem of Martek: Clear Crystal (77/RR) is a good addition.

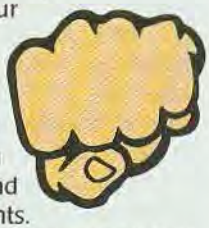
Artifacts impose difficulties similar to that of holdings, since world-specific artifacts require champions from their own world to wield them. At least one artifact should be a part of your deck; otherwise, an artifact like the Ebony Cup of Fate (8/FR Chase) is going to ruin your whole game. You're allowed to have up to 10 artifacts in a deck, but unless you're designing an artifact-themed deck, three is probably enough.

Support cards

Depending on the them of your deck, it's time to see how much room you have for support cards (psionic powers, thief abilities, blood abilities, allies, wizard and cleric spells, and unarmed combat cards). You should reserve 12–15 cards to use on attack and defense.

This is normally the point where you count all of the cards you've accumulated and groan that you have room for only three allies, right? If that's the case, go back through your existing selections and see what you can live without. Do you really need 15 champions, or can you survive with 12? Are all 10 of those magical items really needed? What's the chance that you're going to be able to use all five of those holdings? Have you selected artifacts that can be used by only a single champion in your deck?

A common mistake is to try to add a bit of everything so that you're prepared for anything that your opponents throw at you. What is it that this deck is supposed to do again, anyway? Always keep your theme in mind.



Remember that these are the cards that are truly going to create the interaction between your deck and those of your opponents. Champion and realm powers are all fine and dandy, but these are the cards that protect and destroy empires. Choose well.

Don't overlook the Myrmidons (210/4th) ally. Being able to recycle your cards can easily be the difference between victory and defeat. Other useful card recyclers include the Recall (74/DL) spell, and the Dark Powers (22/RL) event.

Even if you've managed to include a wide variety of champions, don't simply grab a few of each support card and toss them in your deck. The chances of having the right champion and the right support card in your deck can be rare, especially if you have two psionicists and four psionic power cards. You'll find more often than not that you are stuck with cards in your hand that you can't use them.

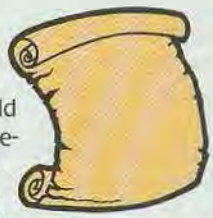
Remember that having a psionicist in your deck doesn't mean that you have to have psionic power cards; you probably selected that champion because of his power anyway. Always choose support cards that can be used by almost any of your champions.

Creativity

Building a highly competitive deck can lead to a lot of fun during a typical SPELLFIRE game, but fun, creative decks can add even more excitement. To build creative decks, it's a good idea to go through your collection of SPELLFIRE cards slowly and find a common thread between the cards you have.

For example, you might decide to build a deck that includes only those champions from the DRAGONLANCE® Chronicles; you might want to create a deck around the villains that have appeared in the various FORGOTTEN REALMS® novels. Maybe you want to use all of the cards you can find with words "fire" or "flame" in their title.

All's fair ...



Try to keep in mind that your SPELLFIRE game should be an enjoyable experience for everyone. This means avoiding things like "touch rules" but allowing a new player to take back a badly planned move (like attacking with a monster when you have the Lovely Colleen in your pool).

If you have any questions concerning the SPELLFIRE game, please send us a line. You can send e-mail by writing to tsrjim@aol.com. You can also visit the SPELLFIRE forum in America Online (Keyword: TSR; we're in the Q&A section under TSR Worlds). If you prefer to support your local mailman, just write a letter to TSR (ATTN: SPELLFIRE Design Team), 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

In addition to behind-the-scenes work on the SPELLFIRE game, Jim has designed the Sword of the Dales *adventure trilogy and the the* Vilhon Reach *accessory. Also, he has co-designed the* Netheril: Empire of Magic *expansion for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign.*

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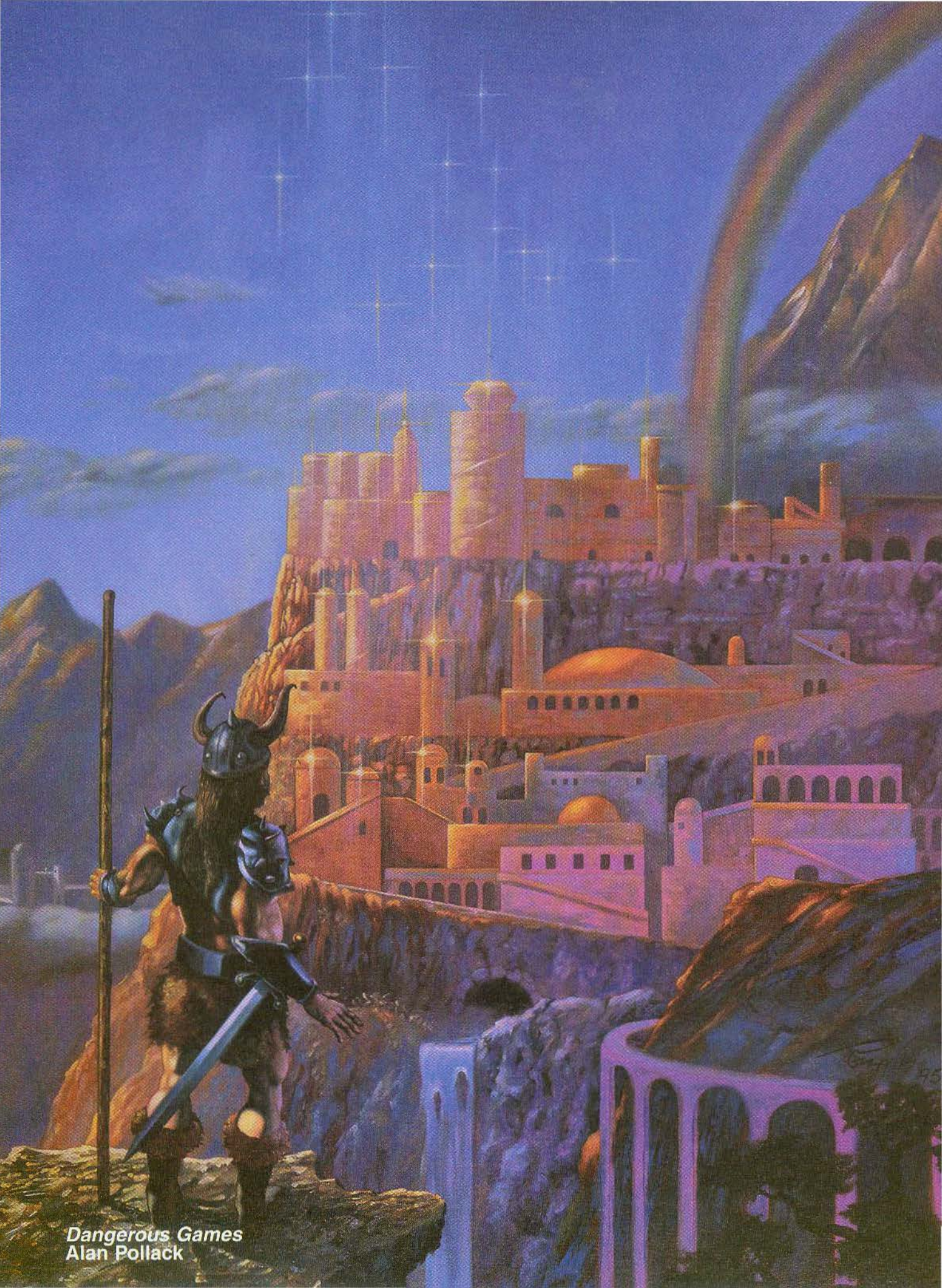

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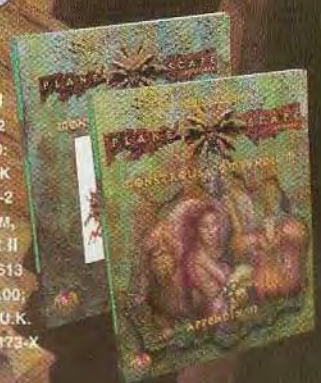

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